

Screening Tool for Victims of Human Trafficking

The following are sample questions social service organizations can ask in screening an individual to determine if s/he is a potential victim of human trafficking. As with domestic violence victims, if you think a person is a victim of trafficking, you do not want to begin by asking directly if the person has been beaten or held against her/his will. Instead, you want to start at the edges of her/his experience. And if possible, you should enlist the help of a staff member who speaks the person's language and understands the person's culture, keeping in mind that any questioning should be done confidentially.

You should screen interpreters to ensure they do not know the victim or the traffickers and do not otherwise have a conflict of interest.

Before you ask the person any sensitive questions, try to get the person alone if s/he came to you accompanied by someone who could be a trafficker posing as a spouse, other family member, or employer. However, when requesting time alone, you should do so in a manner that does not raise suspicions.

Suggested Screening Questions

- Can you leave your job or situation if you want?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?
- Have you been physically harmed in any way?
- What are your working or living conditions like?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Do you sleep in a bed, on a cot, or on the floor?
- Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep, or go to the bathroom?
- Are there locks on your doors and windows so you cannot get out?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- Has your identification or documentation been taken from you?
- Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?

If you think you have come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1.888.3737.888**. This hotline will help you determine if you have encountered victims of human trafficking, will identify local resources available in your community to help victims, and will help you coordinate with local social service organizations to help protect and serve victims so they can begin the process of restoring their lives. For more information on human trafficking visit: www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking.

Screening Tool for Victims of Human Trafficking (Continued)

This tool contains key questions law enforcement officers should consider asking to determine whether someone is a victim of human trafficking. The questions will also help to secure information that can later be used as testimonial evidence.

Fraud/Financial Coercion Questions

- How did you get your job?
- How did you get into this country?
- Who brought you into this country?
- Did you come to this country for a specific job that you were promised?
- Who promised you this job?
- Were you forced to do different work?
- Who forced you into doing different work than what was promised?
- Was there some sort of work contract signed?
- Who organized your travel?
- How was payment for your travel handled?
- Are you getting paid to do your job?
- Do you actually receive payment or is your money being held for you?
- Do you owe your employer money?
- Are there records or receipts of what is owed to your employer/recruiter?
- Are there records/receipts of what was earned/paid to you?
- How were financial transactions handled?
- Are you in possession of your own legal (I.D.) documents? If not, why?
- Were you provided false documents or identification?
- Are you being made to do things that you do not want to do?

Physical Abuse Questions

- Were you ever threatened with harm if you tried to leave?
- Did you ever witness any threats against other people if they tried to leave?
- Has your family been threatened?
- Do you know about any other person's family ever being threatened?
- Were you ever physically abused, or did you ever witness abuse against another person?
- What type of physical abuse did you witness?
- Were there any objects or weapons used in the physical abuse?
- Where are these objects or weapons located?
- Was knowledge of this abuse ever communicated to a person outside of this situation (e.g., police reports, domestic violence reports, hospital records, social service records)?
- Was anyone else ever abused or threatened with harm in your presence?
- How were medical problems handled, and who attended to them?

Freedom of Movement Questions

- Is your freedom of movement restricted?
- Do you live and work in the same place?
- What were the conditions under which you were left unattended?
- Were there instances of physical restriction through locks, chains, etc.?
- Where are the locks used and who has the keys to them?
- How was movement in public places handled (e.g., car, van, bus, subway)?
- Who supervised your movement in public places?
- How was the purchase of private goods and services handled (e.g., medicines, prescriptions)?
- What forms of media or telecommunication did you have access to (e.g., television, radio, newspapers, magazines, telephone, the Internet)?

Psychological Coercion Questions

Behavioral indicators:

- Who are you afraid of?
- Why are you afraid of them?
- What would you like to see happen to the people who hurt you (e.g., jail, deportation)?
- How do you feel about the police? Why?

Environmental Indicators:

- Do you live and work in the same place?
- Where do you live/eat/sleep?
- Where do the alleged perpetrators live/eat/sleep?
- Are the living conditions between the two excessively disparate?

Law enforcement officers questioning the victim should consider the following:

- Is there evidence of possible "Stockholm" or "Patty Hearst" Syndrome where the victim, because of her/his dependency, actually begins to identify with the trafficker?

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