

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ASSESSMENT FOR RUNAWAY & HOMELESS YOUTH

The following document contains questions that can be used to assess a client for potential signs that she/he has been a victim of human trafficking. The suggestions and indicators below are not exhaustive or cumulative in nature and each question taken alone may not indicate a potential trafficking situation. Assessment questions should be tailored to your program and client's specific needs.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Victims of both labor and sex trafficking may reach out to Runaway and Homeless Youth programs for services while in a trafficking situation or after exiting a situation. In order to assess whether a client is a victim of trafficking, it is important to understand the definition of human trafficking, as well as red flags and potential indicators of a human trafficking situation.

Definition of Human Trafficking from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA):

- Sex Trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, providing, or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, OR in which the person induced to perform such an act has not yet attained 18 years of age.¹
- Labor Trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.²

RED FLAGS & INDICATORS FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Many of these signs may be common for runaway and homeless youth, but may also indicate human trafficking.

General Trafficking Indicators

- Inconsistencies in their story regarding where they live, when they came to their current location and lack of knowledge about the city or state they are in.
- No access to personal documents or identification (ID, Visa, Passport, Birth Certificate, etc.).
- No access to a bank account or any other money/financial resources.
- Not allowed to contact friends or family.
- Not allowed to leave a living or working situation unless monitored.
- Signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, malnourishment, or torture.
- Not allowed to speak for themselves – a 3rd party speaks or translates for the individual.

¹ 22 U.S.C. § 7102.

² Ibid.

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Sex Trafficking Indicators in Runaway and Homeless Youth

Runaway and Homeless Youth programs may encounter clients who exhibit signs of involvement in the commercial sex industry by a partner, family member and/or controller. A victim may be an individual who:

- Is under 18 years of age and providing commercial sex acts.
- Expresses an interest in older men or is in a relationship with an older man.
- Frequents internet sites known for commercial sex, such as Backpage, Myspace and Craigslist.
- Has unexplained shopping trips or unexpectedly acquires expensive jewelry, clothing or a cell phone.
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a controller (boyfriend, pimp, manager, or “daddy”) or mentions having to meet a nightly quota.
- Uses language of “the life” or the commercial sex industry, such as referring to a boyfriend as a “daddy” or the streets as “the track”.
- Has been forced by a partner/family member to provide sexual favors or commercial sex to others through informal arrangements, online advertisements, escort services and/or street prostitution.
- Exhibits poor health and/or has one or more untreated sexually transmitted diseases/infections.
- Has had to terminate one or more pregnancies over a period of time. If pregnant, hesitates to answer who the father may be or seems unsure of who the father is.
- Exhibits signs of branding such as tattoos with the controller’s name and/or burn marks.

Labor Trafficking Indicators in Runaway and Homeless Youth

Runaway and Homeless Youth programs may encounter clients who exhibit signs of forced labor by an employer, partner, family member and/or other controller. A victim may be an individual who:

- Has been physically and/or sexually abused by an employer or someone who forces the individual to work.
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours and is unpaid, paid very little or paid only through tips.
- Is unable to take breaks or days off or has unusual restrictions at work.
- Owes a large and/or increasing debt and is unable to pay it off.
- Was recruited with false promises concerning the nature and conditions of the work.
- Has been forced by a family member to work inside or outside of the home for long hours without access to his/her earnings.
- Has unexplained work injuries or signs of untreated illnesses or diseases.
- Has been engaged in door-to-door sales and expresses being abandoned by his/her crew.
- Is working and/or living in a location with high security measures (boarded up or tinted windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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General Trafficking Assessment Tips

As with any assessment of a victim of crime, there are some general points to be aware of when evaluating a client's needs. Listed below are general tips for conducting an assessment with a potential victim of trafficking.

- Keep in mind that many victims do not self-identify as “human trafficking victims” due to lack of knowledge about the crime itself and also power and control dynamics involved in trafficking situations.
- Be conscious of the language that you use when speaking with a potential victim of trafficking. Mirroring the language that the potential victim uses can be a helpful first step.
 - Example: If the potential victim refers to her controller as her boyfriend, referring to that person as a “pimp” or a “sex trafficker” may have a negative impact. Although these are terms that can be used for controllers in the commercial sex industry, the potential victim may not identify this person in this way.
- Be aware of power dynamics when a third party is accompanying or interpreting for the potential victim. Try to speak to the potential victim alone or secure an outside interpreter.
- Be aware that canned stories are common and that the true story may not emerge until trust has been built with the potential victim after multiple meetings.

General Trafficking Assessment Questions

The following questions could be applicable to both situations of sex and labor trafficking.

- 1) Does anyone control you or tell you what to do?
- 2) How did you meet this person? How did you find out about this job?
- 3) Is your communication (calls, emails, conversations) ever restricted or monitored?
- 4) Do you have access to all your identification/personal documents?
- 5) Do you have access to any money/the money you earn? Does anyone take your money or a portion of your money?
- 6) What were your expectations of the situation? Has your experience matched your expectations/what you were promised?
- 7) What are your expectations of what would happen if you didn't do what this person asked of you?
- 8) What are your expectations of what would happen if you left this person/situation?

Sex Trafficking Assessment Questions for RHY

Some runaway and homeless youth may have been forced to engage in commercial sex by a partner, family member, house mother/father, or other controller. Below are sample questions to detect possible signs of sex trafficking:

- 1) How do you get by? Who do you depend on since you've been away from home/on the street?
- 2) How did you meet this person(s)/your boyfriend/etc.?

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- 3) Has this person ever pressured you to do something you weren't comfortable doing?
- 4) Has this person ever pressured you to engage in any sexual acts against your will?
- 5) Has this person ever taken intimate photos of you and do you know what they were used for? Were these photos ever sent to other people or posted online (Craigslist, Backpage, Myspace)?
- 6) Have you ever exchanged sex for food, a place to stay or other things you needed?
- 7) Has this person or someone else ever forced you to engage in commercial sex through online sites, escort services or street prostitution?
- 8) Are you required to earn a certain amount of money/meet a quota for this person? What would happen if you did not meet this quota?
- 9) Have you ever been abused (physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, etc.) or threatened by this person?
- 10) Have you ever witnessed anyone else being abused or threatened by this person?
- 11) Has this person ever introduced you to hard drugs, prescription medication, etc.?
- 12) Do you owe a debt to this person? What would happen if you don't pay this debt back? Where did the debt come from?

Labor Trafficking Specific Questions for RHY

Some runaway and/or homeless youth may have been forced to work by an employer, crew leader, family member, friend or partner. Below are sample questions to detect possible signs of labor trafficking:

- 1) How did you meet this employer? How did you find out about this job opportunity?
- 2) How many hours do you have to work?
- 3) What happens if you work fewer hours or take breaks?
- 4) How much are you paid? How much are you able to keep for yourself?
- 5) Do you have to meet a daily quota (especially for sales crews and peddling/begging rings)?
- 6) What happens if you don't meet that quota?
- 7) Do you owe a debt to this person or to anyone?
- 8) Do you have to stay in the same place with other people who work for this person? What are the conditions like? Where do you sleep and eat?
- 9) Do you have to pay a fee to your employer in order to stay in this housing?
- 10) If your job requires traveling (traveling sales crew), are you made aware of each location you will be going to and how long you will be there?
- 11) Have you ever been threatened or punished if you indicated you did not want to work?
- 12) Have you ever been abused (physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, etc.) or threatened by this person?
- 13) Have you ever witnessed anyone else being abused or threatened by this person?

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