

IDENTIFYING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM



Human Trafficking
Task Force

Department of
Children & Youth

PURPOSE

Following a thorough review of validated screening instruments for youth involved in the child protection system, a team of subject matter experts adapted this set of evidence-based, survivor-informed tools. This information is designed to complement existing assessments and processes used in Ohio's child protection system while screening for concerns of both sex and labor trafficking, as defined federally and by the Ohio Revised Code.

Definition of Human Trafficking

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- **Sex trafficking** 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 attained 18 years of age; or
- Recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or the obtaining of a person for labor or services, through use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt, bondage, or slavery. [-Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000](#)
- Equivalent to the federal statute, the ORC recognizes children cannot consent to commercial sex. For **minors under the age of 18**, and for people with developmental disabilities, law enforcement officials do not need to prove the individual was compelled to engage in commercial sexual activity. [O.R.C. Section 2905.32 Trafficking in persons.](#)

General Guidance and Considerations

1. This document contains four separate screening tools that can be used to accommodate different situations and screening needs. They can be used together or separately.
2. These questions are sensitive in nature, and the user should be mindful of how and where to discuss them with the child and/or caretaker in the most trauma-responsive way, as well as where the user stores this information.
3. The user should ask questions in a manner consistent with the child's age and development, and accommodate for any physical, cognitive, or learning disabilities a child and/or caretaker possesses.
4. The user should consider any language barriers and immediately address them by using a certified third-party interpreter.
5. All of the tools can assist in assessing safety, identifying child vulnerabilities and risk contributors, safety planning, and case planning.
6. When utilizing these screening tools, if the user learns that human trafficking has occurred in the past or is actively occurring to the child or caretaker, they should follow their agency's human trafficking response protocol and implement strategies gathered from training resources.
7. If the user's agency does not have a human trafficking response protocol or would like to improve the current protocol, the affiliated agency can contact the Ohio Department of Children and Youth at Antihumantrafficking@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov and the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force AHT@dps.ohio.gov to be connected with subject matter experts that provide direct technical assistance on building an agency-wide children services response.

If a Child is Identified as a Victim of Human Trafficking

1. A new referral for abuse and/or neglect should be completed.
2. Ensure that the identification is reflected in the AFCARS section of their person profile.
3. Complete a referral to appropriate wraparound services.
4. Always follow the local agency's human trafficking response protocol.

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SCREENING TOOLS INCLUDED

Missing From Care: Human Trafficking Rapid Screening Tool..... 4

Should be used:

- When a child is recovered from being missing from care
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Children Services Human Trafficking Universal Screening Tool – Questions for Child..... 6

Should be used:

- With the child at any time, and multiple times
 - In conjunction with the Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Case Reviews, and Semi/Annual Reviews
 - When a referral indicates possible human trafficking
 - When collateral information indicates possible human trafficking
 - At any point during the family’s involvement with the PCSA in the presence of high-risk factors that increase the youth’s vulnerability
 - In conjunction with the *Children Services Human Trafficking Universal Screening Tool – Questions for Caretakers*
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Children Services Human Trafficking Universal Screening Tool – Questions for Caretaker..... 7

Should be used:

- With the caretaker at any time, and multiple times
 - In conjunction with the Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Case Reviews, and Semi-Annual Reviews
 - When a referral indicates possible human trafficking
 - When collateral information indicates possible human trafficking
 - At any point during the family’s involvement with the PCSA in the presence of high-risk factors that increase the youth’s vulnerability
 - In conjunction with the *Children Services Human Trafficking Universal Screening Tool – Questions for Child*
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Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool – Screening for Caretaker Victimization..... 9

Should be used:

- In conjunction with the Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Case Reviews, and Semi/Annual Reviews
- At any point during the family’s involvement with the PCSA in the presence of concerns that indicate the caretaker is a potential victim of human trafficking
- If the caretaker is known or suspected to be involved in commercial sex
- If the caretaker is known or suspected of working in an unsafe or exploitative environment

MISSING FROM CARE - HUMAN TRAFFICKING RAPID SCREENING TOOL

Purpose: To determine what circumstances led to the child going missing, and whether the child experienced human trafficking while missing.

Considerations prior to using this tool: This screening tool should be **completed within 48 hours** of the child's recovery. The child's physical needs should be met prior to administering this tool, including providing access to immediate medical care, food, sleep, etc. Data from SACWIS and NCMEC indicates youth with histories of being missing from home or placement are at high risk for trafficking, due to an increase of unmet needs and less access to safely meet those needs. When they return to care, it is critical to determine if they experienced exploitation while missing to quickly connect them to recovery resources and reduce their vulnerabilities to future victimization.

Step 1: Identify contributing factors to missing status

Was it your decision to leave your placement? If yes:

- What made you want to leave?
- Did you feel safe at your placement? What made you feel safe or unsafe?
- If your placement could have done anything to help you stay longer, what would it have been?
- What would help you feel safe and comfortable at your (next) placement so you wouldn't want to leave again?

While you were missing from care...

- Where did you go?
- Who were you with?
- Did you eat? How often and what did you eat?
- When and where did you shower?
- How did you pay for the things you needed or wanted?
- Did you feel safe? What made you feel safe or unsafe?

Step 2: While you were missing from care...

If the child answers yes to questions 1-3 below, the interviewer can reasonably conclude trafficking occurred.

	Yes	No
1. Did anyone offer you a place to stay, drugs, money, food, or anything of value in exchange for a sex act or explicit photos or videos? <i>Note to screener: A sex act can include sexual activity, engaging in a performance, modeling, or participating in the production of material that is obscene, sexually oriented, or nudity oriented.</i>		
2. Did anyone collect money, drugs, food, or anything of value from others in exchange for a sex act or explicit photos or videos?		
3. Did you work for someone or do something against the law for someone, including family members, because you felt like you had no choice? If yes: • Did you feel like you had no choice because someone threatened or hurt you, family members, friends, or coworkers? • Did you feel like you had no choice because of debt, money issues, needing shelter, fear around immigration status, or fear of getting in trouble? <i>Note to screener: Screener should only answer yes in the accompanying column if both question #3 and either question #3a or #3b are answered yes. Additionally, questions #3a and #3b do not represent an exhaustive list of types of force, fraud, and coercion. Labor trafficking requires an element of compulsion; therefore, the screener may need to gather additional information regarding force, fraud, or coercion to determine whether the child experienced labor trafficking.</i>		
4. Did anyone prevent you from returning to your placement or contacting someone safe? *		
5. Did anyone hurt you in any way? *		

*Questions 4 or 5 do not conclusively determine human trafficking. If a child answers yes to question 4 or 5, rely on your safety reassessment to supplement these questions and determine if child maltreatment occurred.

CHILDREN SERVICES HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIVERSAL SCREENING TOOL – QUESTIONS FOR CHILD

Purpose: This tool assesses if the child has historically or is currently experiencing human trafficking and considers scenarios of trafficking such as child sexual abuse material, a parent/caretaker offender, forced criminality, and other scenarios that systems involved youth may be particularly vulnerable to experiencing.

Considerations prior to using this tool: Minors engaged in commercial sex acts are always victims of trafficking, including in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion, and no third party is required to facilitate the commercial sex act. Even if a child under the age of 18 (or a person with a developmental disability) states they engaged in commercial sex voluntarily, they are still a victim of human trafficking. Sex and labor trafficking can occur in any venue and in the context of any relationship, so the screener should be knowledgeable regarding the elements of trafficking.

This tool should be utilized in the following circumstances:

1. This is a universal screening tool and can be used with a child at any time.
2. When a referral or collateral source indicates concerns of the child experiencing human trafficking.
3. In conjunction with the Safety Assessment, Family Assessments, Case Reviews, and Semi/Annual Reviews.
4. Any time during a family's involvement with the PCSA, especially in the presence of factors that increase a child's vulnerability to trafficking, such as a frequent history of going missing from care, a history of experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty, a history of sexual abuse, concerns of unsafe relationships, concerns of hypersexual behaviors, and a caretaker's history of experiencing trafficking.

	Yes	No
1. Has anyone ever offered or given you anything (money, a place to stay, a ride, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs/alcohol) in exchange for any kind of sex act? <i>Note to screener: A sex act can include sexual activity, engaging in a performance, modeling, or participating in the production of material that is obscene, sexually oriented, or nudity oriented.</i>		
2. Has anyone ever offered or given you anything (like money, a place to stay, a ride, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs/alcohol) in exchange for being in or sending explicit images or videos?		
3. Has someone else ever received anything like money, a place to stay, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs/alcohol in exchange for you performing a sexual activity or sending explicit images or videos?		
4. Have members of your family ever asked or directed you to engage in sexual activity with someone else? If yes: • Did they receive anything like money, a place to stay, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs/alcohol in exchange for you doing that? <i>Note to screener: Screener should only answer yes in the accompanying column if both questions #4 and #4a are answered yes.</i>		
5. Have you ever worked for someone or done something against the law for someone, including family members, because you felt like you had no choice? If yes: • Did you feel like you had no choice because someone threatened or hurt you, family members, friends, or coworkers? • Did you feel like you had no choice because of debt, money issues, needing shelter, fear around immigration status, or fear of getting in trouble? <i>Note to screener: Screener should only answer yes in the accompanying column if both question #5 and either question #5a or #5b are answered yes. Additionally, questions #5a and #5b do not represent an exhaustive list of types of force, fraud, and coercion. Labor trafficking requires an element of compulsion; therefore, the screener may need to gather additional information regarding force, fraud, and coercion to determine whether the child experienced labor trafficking.</i>		

**It is common for a child to not know whether something of value was exchanged when a third party is facilitating trafficking. If a child answers no to question #3 or #4a, but has disclosed engaging in sexual acts with adults, including sending explicit images or videos, or that a family member has asked them to engage in sexual activity with someone else, the PCSA should still follow mandated reporting requirements and attempt to gather information from collateral sources as to whether there was a commercial element to determine if the child experienced sex trafficking.*

CHILDREN SERVICES HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIVERSAL SCREENING TOOL – QUESTIONS FOR CARETAKER

Purpose: This tool for caretakers can be used to assess family and child circumstances as well as caretaker attitudes and behaviors that may increase or reduce a child’s vulnerability to trafficking.

Considerations: All systems-involved children are at an increased risk for human trafficking, but there are certain situations that can further elevate that risk. Responding with interventions to these certain situations can increase protective capacities to prevent victimization or re-victimization of the child.

This tool should be utilized in the following circumstances:

1. This is a universal screening tool, meaning that this tool can be utilized with a caretaker at any time.
2. When a referral or collateral source indicates concerns of the child experiencing human trafficking.
3. In conjunction with the Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Case Reviews, and Semi/Annual Reviews.
4. Any time during a family’s involvement with the PCSA, especially in the presence of factors that increase a child’s vulnerability to trafficking, such as a frequent history of going missing from care, a history of experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty, a history of sexual abuse, concerns of unsafe relationships, concerns of hypersexual behaviors, and a caretaker’s history of experiencing trafficking.

How to use this tool: If the caretaker answers “yes” to a question, then the follow up questions should be asked. Based on the answers received, the professional should assess if trafficking has occurred and/or what interventions can be put in place to prevent victimization from occurring. If a caretaker answers unknown to any of these questions, the professional should gather additional information regarding why the caretaker lacks this knowledge, assessing for concerns of neglect or other maltreatment; the professional should report any safety concerns as appropriate.

	Yes	No	Unk
1. Does your child have any form of income (including from illicit industries)? If yes: • How does your child earn money? • How much does your child earn? • Has your child ever had to miss school to earn an income? • How does your child spend their income? • Does this income contribute to household expenses? How much? • What would happen to your child or family if your child suddenly lost this income?			
2. Do you or another caretaker struggle with a substance use disorder? If yes: • How do you afford substances? • Has anyone offered you substances or anything of value in exchange for spending time with your child? • Has anyone offered you substances or anything of value in exchange for images of your child?			
3. Does your child have a significant other? If yes: • How old is the significant other? • Does this relationship appear safe?			

4. Has your child gone missing from home or their placement? If yes: • Did they voluntarily go missing? • Where did they go when they left? • Why do you think they left? • Have you tried to prevent your child from leaving home/their placement? If so, what have you tried?			
5. Does your child ever possess money, drugs, or other items of value for which you don't know how they got them?			
6. Is your child involved with a gang? If yes: • Have you tried to prevent your child from being involved in gangs? If so, what have you tried?			
7. Have you ever suspected your child is sending explicit images or videos? If yes: • Have you tried to prevent your child from sending explicit images or videos? If so, what have you tried?			
8. Have you ever suspected your child is engaging in commercial sex (the child is being provided with something of value – money, substances, shelter, food, clothing, jewelry, etc. in exchange for sex acts, including sexually explicit photos or videos)? If yes: • Why do you suspect this or how do you know this? • Have you tried anything to prevent your child from engaging in commercial sex? If so, what have you tried? <i>Note: If a parent or caretaker is aware that a child is involved in commercial sex and fails to report it to the appropriate authorities or fails to intervene, a referral for neglect should be made to the public children services agency.</i>			
9. Is your child expected to help with chores? If yes: • What chores are they expected to help with? • What happens if your child does not complete their chores?			
10. Do you have concerns about any of your child's social relationships?			
11. Do you have concerns about your child's sexual/reproductive health?			
12. Do you have concerns about your child's behavior?			

ADULT HUMAN TRAFFICKING SCREENING TOOL – SCREENING FOR CARETAKER VICTIMIZATION

Purpose: This tool is used to assess the caretaker’s vulnerability to human trafficking. When interviewing a parent or caretaker, information can be gathered regarding both the caretaker’s and the child’s vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation, as both impact the safety of the child.

Considerations: The questions asked in this tool are sensitive in nature. These questions should be asked without the child or another party being present. The professional should discuss the limits of confidentiality of this screener and that its purpose is to assess for potential safety factors that impact the child involved as well as to ensure the caretaker has access to appropriate resources and services.

How to use this tool: This tool can be used at any time prior to or during a children services investigation or ongoing case. This tool should be used if there are any concerns the caretaker may be experiencing human trafficking, engaging in commercial sex, or experiencing an unsafe or exploitative work environment.

	Yes	No
1. Is anyone offering or enticing you with drugs to get you to do something?		
2. Is anyone keeping drugs from you if you don’t do what they want you to do?		
3. Is anyone threatening to contact law enforcement (including immigration authorities) if you don’t do what they want you to do?		
4. Is anyone threatening to harm you, your children, or other family members to make you do something you do not want to do (work/labor, sexual act, criminal act, etc.)?		
5. Can you quit your job without fear of harm or retaliation from your supervisor?		
6. Is your employer withholding your earnings until you pay off debt?		
7. Have you had to engage in sexual activity to meet your and your family’s basic needs?		
8. Has a partner/family member ever pressured you to have sex with people to help with finances?		

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

Training

Professionals should not administer this tool prior to receiving adequate human trafficking training. Recommended training opportunities and resources include:

Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) Employees	Identifying and Responding to Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking To access this live training, log in to CAPS LMS, search for the training title, and register for one of the available sessions.
Non-PCSA Child-Serving Professionals	Review a variety of training opportunities and resources at https://ocjs.ohio.gov/anti-human-trafficking/training . For more specific training or technical assistance, please contact the Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force at AHT@dps.ohio.gov .

Discussing Human Trafficking with Children and Youth

Please note that this tool is a resource for child-serving professionals to screen youth and their caretakers for human trafficking. While this tool may indicate whether a forensic interview is needed, it should not be used in place of a forensic interview.

- For general guidance on discussing human trafficking with youth, professionals can reference the guide, [How to Talk to Youth About Human Trafficking](#), developed by Homeland Security's Blue Campaign.
- For guidance on discussing human trafficking with children with developmental disabilities, professionals can reference the guide, [Interviewing Children with Disabilities](#), developed by the Zero Abuse Project.

Responding to Children and Youth Identified as Victims

If the tool indicates the child being interviewed is a potential victim of human trafficking, please refer to your agency's human trafficking response protocol. If your agency does not have a response protocol, please complete the following:

- For public children services agencies that do not have a response protocol, please contact DCY's Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at AntiHumanTrafficking@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov for technical assistance and protocol development.
- All other child-serving professionals should contact the Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force at AHT@dps.ohio.gov for technical assistance and protocol development.

