

Screening Tool for Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation

The following document contains questions that can be used to assess a client for potential signs that she has been a victim of human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation . 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 context and client's specific needs. This screening tool was developed from best practices ,the input of an advisory committee of survivors of trafficking, and the York Region Anti Human Trafficking Committee.

Screening for Human Trafficking for CSE should:

- Take place in a private setting - no friends, partners or relatives should be present, including to provide translation, as they may be involved in her trafficking
- Be confidential - clients should be informed of their right to confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality
- Be conducted in the client's primary language with professional translation
- Keep in mind that many victim-survivors do not self-identify as "human trafficking victims" due to lack of knowledge about the crime and also power and control dynamics involved in trafficking situations.

Framing the conversation

- Explain why you care about the individual's situation and that you have worked with and assisted other individuals in situations that may be similar to her own. Explaining who you are and why you are there is particularly important to correct any misperceptions of your role. Do not promise anything you can not deliver.
- When appropriate, attempt to engage in casual conversation about lighter topics and ask questions to try to get the individual to open up, even if it's not about their trafficking situation or service needs. Although the client might be confused, scared and/or distracted, engaging in casual conversation before the assessment helps to build trust and set the tone for effective, non-defensive communication.
- In your initial assessment, try to focus predominantly on assessments of their service needs, but weave in other questions naturally and when appropriate.
- There is not a 'standard script' that can be used with victim-survivor's - questions should fit the context and indicators you have observed in the situation
- Use open-ended questions, allowing for the victim-survivor to share her story
- Establishing rapport and a degree of trust is key in a victim-survivor sharing their story. Keep in mind that her story will usually come out over a series of interactions, not necessarily in one encounter.

Areas for Screening

Control Indicators

Examples:

- Exhibits fear, anxiety, hyper-vigilance or signs of depression
- Signs of physical abuse and /or sexual abuse
- Evidence of a controlling or dominating intimate relationships – i.e. accompanied by a partner who appears controlling; repeated phone calls from a partner, and/or excessive concern about displeasing a partner
- Not allowed to speak for herself– a partner or 3rd party speaks or translates for the individual
- Lack of identification (driver's license, health card, passport, etc)

Example Questions:

- Can you tell me what happened to your (injured area)?
- I notice you came in with someone, can you tell me a bit about your relationship with him/her?
- Is there anyone or anything in your life that you are afraid of right now?
- Can you tell me where your identification is?

Isolation Indicators

Examples:

- History of frequent moves (around the city, between cities, provincially, or internationally)
- Lack of contact with family or friends
- Identification from another city, province or country

Example Questions:

- What has brought you to York Region (or city or town)?
- Who do you normally turn to for support?
- Who are you staying with here in (city or town)?

Sex Trade Indicators:

Examples:

- Use of lingo or slang relating to the sex trade– i.e. referring to a boyfriend as “Daddy” or talking about “the game”, “the life”, “Johns” “tricks”, etc
- Indicates that she is involved in the sex industry and has a boyfriend/manager/“daddy”/pimp
- Engaged in sex work and has to meet a nightly quota or someone else ‘holds’ her money
- Exchanging sex for food, a place to stay, drugs, or other material items

Example Questions:**

- How did you first get involved with sex work ("the game")?
- How do you keep yourself safe while you're working?
- Who holds on to your money when you're with clients?
- There is an organization here in York Region that provides support for women involved in sex work, would you be interested in their info?

****Keep in mind that not all women involved in the sex trade are trafficked. Ask questions to help determine whether she is working independently or whether she is under the control of a trafficker. Remember, many trafficking victim-survivors will not identify their controllers as traffickers, but may be in an intimate partner or family relationship with them.**

Next Steps

- If, through your conversation(s), you determine that this woman is a potentially trafficked individual offer her resources for assistance and help to contact those resources (i.e provide a private place for her to call and a telephone). Keep in mind that it often takes time and several conversations before a trafficked woman decides to seek help.

York Region Resources:

Women's Support Network's Human Trafficking Helpline : 905 758-5285 (Support/referrals 24/7)

York Regional Police Vice Unit : 905 758-5581 or 911 (Emergencies/Immediate Danger)

This document was created and ratified by the York Region Anti Human Trafficking Committee, 2012.