

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING SCREENING TOOL FOR YOUTH

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# Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST)

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The contents of this guide and screening tool are based on the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST) utilized by Florida’s Department of Children and Families and Department of Juvenile Justice. The content of the HTST is informed by the Shared Hope International *Intervene Practitioner Guide and Intake Tool*, the research and reporting of the Vera Institute’s *Screening for Human Trafficking: Guidelines for Administering the Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVTT) (2014)*, the Covenant House *Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure (2013)*, and research from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

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## HTST Screening Preparation

The screening should be conducted in a safe and non-threatening environment. Screeners should be well-prepared, comfortable working with victims of trauma, and recognize the need to ask questions in an appropriate manner that is sensitive to the needs of youth. The following guidelines should be followed when preparing to conduct a HTST screening:

- Read through the entire screening instrument and Administration Guide, so that you are familiar with the instrument and able to conduct the screening in a conversational style, allowing the youth to direct the flow of discussion.
- Conduct the screening in a private, quiet environment designed to make the youth feel both physically and emotionally comfortable and safe.
- Be prepared to provide the youth with basic needs such as an interpreter, tissues, drink, food, clothing, medical/therapeutic care, and/or access to services, as appropriate.
- If an interpreter is necessary, he/she should be trustworthy (unknown to the youth being interviewed) and able to use the same wording as the screening when asking questions and the same wording as the youth when answering questions. Use of an agency or certified interpreter is required, and interviewers need to offer such to the youth when possible.
- Do not interview a youth in front of a suspected trafficker or individual who is exhibiting controlling behavior over the youth. Do not allow this person to interpret for youth if he/she does not speak fluent English.
- Recognize that dressing in uniforms, suits, or other formal attire may make youth uncomfortable.
- Use strengths-based and trauma-informed care approaches during the screening, allowing youth to lead the direction of the conversation.
- The screening process may need to take place over multiple contact points if the screener decides that the youth needs more time. The screener may postpone the discussion to a later time when the youth is ready to discuss his/her experiences. When a youth displays acute signs of anxiety, the screener should consider contacting a trained mental health professional to complete a session with the youth.
- For the purpose of this tool, “youth” refers to someone ages 10 through 24.

## HTST Administration Guide

The screening instrument contains a number of techniques used to help screeners administer the tool properly. Screeners should be familiar with these techniques, which include the following:

- Instructions to screeners are provided in the HTST in italics throughout the instrument. These instructions guide screeners as to sub-questions that may need to be asked, sections that require information to be filled in, and questions that include prompts for further explanation.
- Introductory comments and questions to youth are in bold typeface. Introductory comments should be read to the youth. Screeners should use a conversational approach to secure answers to the HTST questions, being sensitive to the needs of youth who may be suffering from the effects of exposure to trauma.
- Avoid listing answer options unless the youth feels stuck. All questions should be open-ended rather than multiple choice.
- Screeners should use professional judgment in deciding whether to preface a question or a prompt with phrasing such as, “Please tell me more about that,” or “If you are comfortable, could you tell me about that?”
- Screeners should inform the youth that the purpose of the screening tool is not to punish youth, nor will the screener seek identifying information about potential perpetrators if the youth is not comfortable disclosing. Screeners should help youth understand the purpose of the screening tool is to provide the most helpful, supportive care possible for the youth.
- Screeners should follow state laws and agency guidelines regarding mandatory reporting. In general, screeners should advise youths that confidentiality will not apply if the youth describes a situation where someone is in immediate danger or at risk of being abused or hurting someone else.

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*Begin the screening by reading the following introductory comments to the youth:*

**This is an interview to better understand your current situation and experiences. I will be asking you questions about yourself. Try to be as honest as you can. Some questions may be sensitive and hard for you to answer. You do not have to answer anything you don’t want to answer. You can take a break at any time, ask to finish at a later time, or stop the session. I want you to know you can trust me, and your safety is my priority. What we discuss is confidential, unless you describe a situation where someone has been hurt or may be hurt physically, sexually, or emotionally.<sup>1</sup> If there is something you want to tell me about but you’re not comfortable using names, you can tell me as much as you want, and I will not pressure you about sharing anyone’s identity. I want to have this conversation to understand your experiences and how I can best help you; this is not about getting you or anyone you care for in trouble. Before we get started, do you have any questions?**

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<sup>1</sup>To determine under what conditions confidentiality should be breached, screeners should adhere to mandated reporting requirements, as identified in Ohio Rev. Code § 2151.421.

## Section A – Background Information

1. Date Screened: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
2. Screening Location: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Screener Name: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mode of screening:
  - Interview Completed without need for interpreter
  - Interview completed with the assistance of an interpreter
  - Interpreter needed, but unavailable

## Section B – Demographic Information

5. Youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_
6. ID #: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Race/ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Preferred language: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section C – Youth Personal Background

10. When you're not in a facility, do you go to school?
  - No (*If no, skip to item 11*)
  - Yes (*If yes, proceed to 10a*)
  - Refused to answer

10a. Where do you go to school? \_\_\_\_\_

10b. When you're not in a facility, how many days do you attend school in a typical two-week period?

  - 0 days
  - 1-5 days
  - 6-10 days
  - N/a
11. When you're not in a facility, do you get on the Internet, Wi-Fi, or use phone or tablet apps?
  - No
  - Yes (*If yes, proceed to item 11a*)
  - Refused to answer

11a. What kind of sites or apps do you use?

  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - Snapchat

- Online game chat
- Instant messaging
- Facebook
- Tinder
- Plenty of Fish
- Craigslist
- Backpage
- Other apps or sites \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

12. Have you ever agreed to meet someone you met online or through the Internet or through a phone app?

- No
- Yes (*Prompt by saying, "Tell me more about that."*)
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of unsafe online activity? Yes  No

13. So, do you currently have a boyfriend or girlfriend?

- No (*If no, skip to item 14*)
- Yes (*If yes, proceed to item 13a and 13b*)
- Refused to answer

13a. How old is he or she?

- Less than 10 yrs old
- 10 to 15 years old
- 16 to 17 years old
- 18 to 21 years old
- 22 years or older
- Refused to answer

13b. How did you meet?

- Through a friend
- At school
- Through a family member
- Online
- Public place
- Work
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

14. Do you have any tattoos?

- No (*If no, skip to item 15*)

- Yes (*If yes, proceed to items 14a-14c*)
- Refused to answer
- Staff observed tattoo (*if selected, proceed to items 14a-14c*)

14a. What is the tattoo? (*Screener may respond to this item based on youth response **and/or** based on observation of the tattoo. Check all that apply.*)

- Dollar/currency sign, money bags
- Star/hearts
- Male name
- Female name
- Nickname/street name
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

14b. What does your tattoo mean?

- Family connection
- Personal meaning \_\_\_\_\_
- Romantic partner's name
- Gang-related
- Suspected trafficker's name/initials
- Forced branding/ownership
- No meaning
- Don't know the meaning
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

14c. Who was with you when you got your tattoo?

- Family member
- Friend
- Romantic partner
- No one
- Suspected trafficker
- Gang member
- Refused to answer

15. Do you have any scars or brands that were made on purpose, not from accident or injury?  
(*Screener should respond based upon youth answer **and/or** observation of visible scars*)

- No (*If no, skip to item 16*)
- Yes (*If yes, proceed to item 15a*)
- Screener observes mark(s), but youth denies mark(s) were made intentionally
- Refused to answer

15a. Who was with you when you got your brand or when you received the scar?

- Family member
- Friend
- Romantic partner
- No one
- Suspected trafficker
- Gang member
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Suspicious/Trafficking-Related Tattooing/Branding: Yes  No

## Section D – Living Conditions

**Next, I'd like to talk to you about where you live and the people you live with.**

16. Where were you living before you came here? What type of place were you living in?  
(*Screener may prompt youth by listing examples from below*)

- House
- Apartment
- Group/foster home
- Car/van
- Shelter
- Rehabilitation facility
- Hotel/motel
- Part of a residence (garage, basement, shed)
- Couch-surfing
- Staying in an abandoned building
- Traveling/in-between residences
- Homeless
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

17. Who lived with you?

- Father
- Mother
- Both parents
- Guardian
- Step-parent
- Relative
- Friend
- Romantic partner
- No one
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you pay for where you live?
- No (*If no, skip to item 19*)
  - Yes (*If yes, proceed to item 18a*)

18a. How do you pay for where you live?

- Parents/relatives
- Friends
- Romantic partner
- Myself through employment/job
- Myself through selling drugs
- Myself through stealing
- Myself through engaging in sexual acts for money/material gain
- Panhandle/beg
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you ever had any contacts or visits from Children’s Services? (*Note: Youth may use other terminology including CPS, JFS, HRS, CBC, DCF, DFS, and/or The State*)
- Yes
  - No
  - Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of unsafe living environment: Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

## Section E – Work Information

**Now I’d like to ask you some questions about work situations. What I mean by “work” is anything you have done where you have received something of value (like money, food, clothing, a place to stay, drugs, or gifts) in exchange for your efforts. So your boss may have been a typical employer or may have been a family member, friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, or someone you lived with or had a relationship with.**

20. Did you have to support yourself before coming here?
- No (*If no, skip to item 27*)
  - Yes (*If yes, proceed to item 21*)
21. How did/do you support yourself? (Check all that apply)
- Agricultural/farm work
  - Housekeeping/janitorial work
  - Door-to-door sales
  - Restaurant work
  - Construction
  - Retail
  - Nails/hair



- Massage
- Personal dancing, stripping, or similar
- Refused to answer
- Drug trafficking
- Other (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

21b. What does your parent/guardian/caretaker think of how you support yourself?

- Approve
- Disapprove
- They're not aware
- They have no opinion
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

22. How much money did you make per hour?

- Less than \$8.15/hr
- More than \$8.15/hr but less than \$15/hr
- \$15-25/hr
- More than \$25/hr
- Does not know
- Refused to answer

23. How do you receive money?

- Paid in cash by clients
- Paid in cash by employer/boss
- Money deposited into bank account
- Paid with check
- Paid in-kind through food, a place to stay, clothing, or other non-monetary items/gifts
- Not paid
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

24. Has anyone promised you money that you haven't received?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

25. Does your family owe anyone money that they need your help to repay?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

*Screener may prompt for something else that is owed, like a favor, house, property, or land.*

➤ Evidence of Deceptive Payment Practices? Yes  No

26. Do you live and work at the same place?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

27. Can you quit or could you have quit your job at any time without punishment from your boss or supervisor?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Forced Labor? Yes  No

28. When you think about the future, what do you want to do when you get older? (fill in)

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## **Section F – Leaving or Running Away from Home**

29. Have you ever run away, stayed away, or left your home without permission?

- No (If no, skip to item 30)
- Yes (If yes, proceed to item 29a)
- Refused to answer

29a. How many times have you run away or left without permission?

- 1 to 5 times
- 6 to 10 times
- 11 to 20 times
- More than 20 times
- Refused to answer

29b. How long were you gone the last time you left home?

- 1 to 6 days
- 1 to 4 weeks
- 2 to 3 months
- 4 months or longer
- Refused to answer

29c. Where did you go when you left? (*check all that apply*)

- Friend's place
- Relative's place/other biological parent's place
- Romantic partner's place
- Motel/hotel
- Street
- Out of Town
- Pro-social adult's place
- Anti-social adult's place
- Street gang
- Refused to answer

29d. When you were away, how did you support yourself? (*check all that apply*)

- Family/relatives cared for me
- Friends cared for me
- Romantic partner helped
- Worked (legal employment/jobs)
- Money through drugs
- Money/material gain/favors from prostitution, stripping, or similar activities
- Didn't stay away long enough to need support
- Stealing
- Government assistance
- Panhandling
- Borrowed money from friends
- Trafficker/pimp
- Refused to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Evidence of Excessive Running Away: Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

29e. While you were away, did you keep your money, or did someone keep it for you?

- I kept my money
- Someone kept my money for me
- Refused to answer

29f. Who were you with while you were away?

- No one
- Friends
- Romantic partner
- Trafficker/pimp
- Guardian

- Family/relatives
- Street gang
- Refused to answer

29g. Did that person(s) ever give you things like money, drugs, food, clothes, or other things you needed?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Questionable Financial Support While Away? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

29h. Did you leave town while you were away from home?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

29i. While you were away, did anyone you were with not allow you to go back home?

- No
- **Yes**
- Refused to answer

29j. Why did you leave home? (*check all that apply*)

- Abuse/neglect happening at home
- Unsafe in the community (explain how) \_\_\_\_\_
- To spend more time with friends
- To spend more time with romantic partner
- Forced out of the home by the family or friend
- Conflict at home
- Seeking more independence
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Coercion or Force to Stay on the Run: **Yes** \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they feel unsafe, threatened, controlled, or even tricked into doing something they didn't want to do. I am going to ask you a few questions about things that might have made you feel unsafe, threatened, controlled, or tricked into doing something you didn't want to do.**

29k. While you were away, did you experience anything that made you feel uncomfortable or unsafe?

- No
- Yes (If so, what?) \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

29l. Sometimes young people who are away from home can be taken advantage of and asked to do sexual activities in order to get something they need or want. These activities can include dancing, stripping, posing for photos, or sex of any kind. While you were away, did anyone ever ask you to do something like that?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Sexual Activities for Money, Support, or Gifts? Yes  No

30. In thinking about your past experiences, has anyone ever locked doors or windows or anything else to stop you from leaving when you wanted to? (*If yes, prompt with, "Tell me about that."*)

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Inability to Leave? Yes  No

31. Has anyone ever forced you to get or use false identification, like a fake ID, green card, different name, different age, or something else?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Forced Identity Deception? Yes  No

32. Have you or someone else received something of value like money, a place to stay, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs in exchange for you performing a sexual activity?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➤ Evidence of Compensation for Sexual Activity? Yes  No

33. Have you ever been involved in a gang?

- Yes (*if yes, proceed to 33a*)
- No (*if no, skip the remaining questions*)
- Refused to answer

33a. How did you get involved?

- Using force through actual violence or threats of violence
- Convinced by gang members that joining would improve quality of life
- Recruited by caretakers who were gang members
- Convinced by gang members that gang involvement would provide protection
- No recruitment occurred (youth volunteered)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

33b. Did gang leaders ever require you to do something you felt uncomfortable or unsafe doing?

- Yes
- No
- Refused to answer

33c. Did the gang ever receive money, jewelry, drugs, or anything else for something you were made to do?

- Yes
- No
- Refused to answer

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*Screener, close out the interview by saying the following to the youth:*

**I want to thank you for being open with me and answering these questions. Do you have any questions or is there anything that you would like to talk about?**

**NOTES:**

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## Post-Screening Assessment

Did you observe any nonverbal indicators of past victimization? If so, explain.

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Did you observe any indicators the youth's responses may have been false? If so, explain.

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In considering the totality of the assessment, please identify the youth as the following (check all that apply):

- Non-Victim**  
There is no evidence the youth was exploited for labor or commercial sex.
- Victim – Sex Trafficking**  
There is reason to believe the youth is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Victim – Labor Trafficking**  
There is reason to believe the youth is a victim of labor exploitation.
- Indicated – Sex Trafficking**  
There is suspicion the youth may be a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, but more information is needed.
- Indicated – Labor Trafficking**  
There is suspicion the youth may be a victim of labor exploitation, but more information is needed.