



Finding Your Strengths!

A new approach to serving CSE & CST youth

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Rethink Resources



**Children's
Wisconsin**



**RETHINK
RESOURCES**

Learning Goals

- Identify 2-3 actions team members can take to support young people who are at risk, or have been trafficked, at each stage of readiness
- Recognize options for strength-based questions with young people who have been sex trafficked or are at high risk
- Understand how the tools may be implemented in a variety of settings including: MDTs, residential care, community based services, and other venues looking to elevate youth voice

Background:

Create a visual tool/guide to dynamically support young people, drawing from strengths

- Offer service providers a new way to assess or measure success, positive changes in a young person's life, and share ways in which providers may partner with youth to achieve their desired goals.
- Assumptions:
 1. Youth are facing a continuum of risk
 2. Youth are already taking steps to protect themselves. We need ways to recognize and measure that.
 3. Youth deserve and need effective adult support in their lives. Adults need support and tools like this to make that possible.
- Process:
 1. Literature review of peer reviewed research and practice based evidence/tools
 - ✓ March 2020-August 2020
 2. Listening sessions with youth workers (12 statewide + plus individual stakeholders)
 - ✓ September 2020 – November 2020
 3. Discussions with youth (3 groups ages 16-26)
 - ✓ October 2020 – November 2020
 4. Review all the information and create tool to test out
 - ✓ July 2021

And in response to the WI Indicator Guide for Mandated Reporters ...



Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Indicator and Response Guide



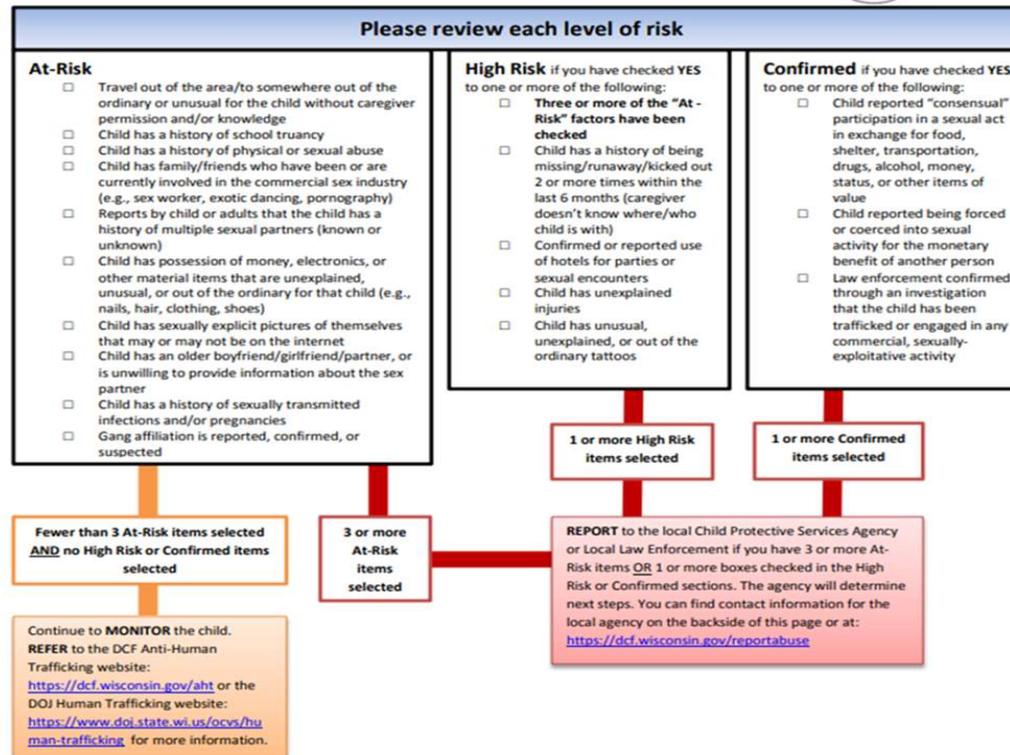
The Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Indicator and Response Guide should be consulted if you have concerns that a child or youth you have contact with is being sexually trafficked or exploited. Review the indicators in this guide and follow the directions for the appropriate response. This indicator and response guide also alerts the reader to indicators or potential red flags that should continue to be monitored.

Mandated Reporters are required to report suspected abuse or neglect of any child, including those that you may learn about through discussions with the child of concern (s.48.981(2) Wis. Stat.).

Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation are both forms of child abuse, even if the perpetrator is unrelated to the child. Although sex trafficking and sexual exploitation share similar elements, they have distinct differences, as noted below:

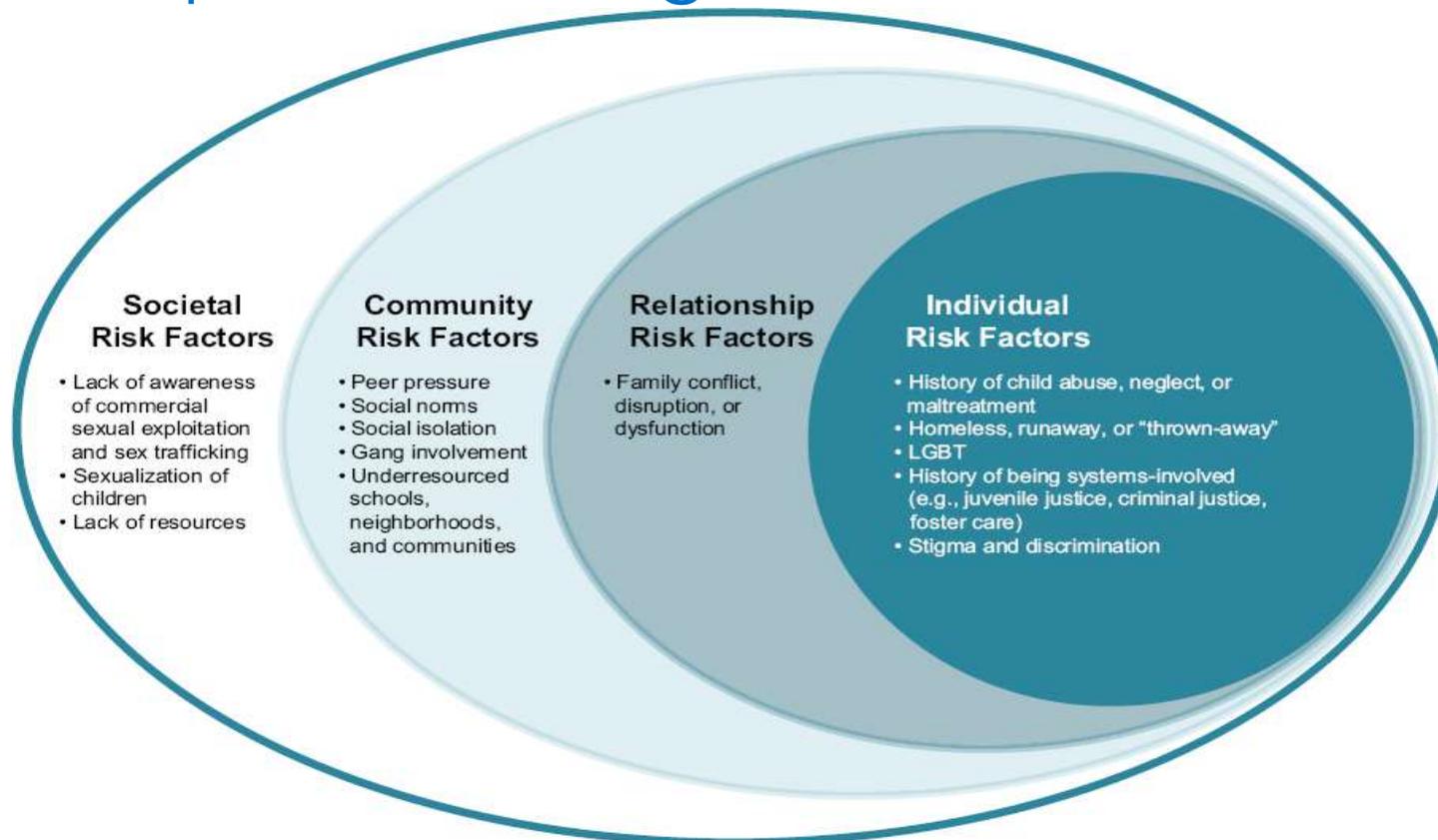
Sex Trafficking of a Child involves another person benefitting from forcing, defrauding, or coercing a child into a commercial sex act with another person (s.948.051 Wis. Stat.).

Sexual Exploitation of a Child involves forcing, defrauding, or coercing a child to engage in a sexually explicit way for the purposes of recording, displaying, and/or distributing the recording (s.948.05 Wis. Stat.).



The Wisconsin Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Indicator and Response Guide was adapted from the 2015 Minnesota Safe Harbor Sexual Exploitation/Trafficking Flowchart. Questions about this tool can be sent to DCFAHT@wisconsin.gov

Being mindful that the continuum of risk encompasses a range of internal & external factors



Key themes in the literature & discussion groups

What youth need:

- To be treated as an individual outside of their experience of risk/CSEC
- To be included in conversations and decision making that impacts their lives
- To be listened to without judgment
- The need for adults to be a consistent presence and not take personally periods of rejection/reluctance
- To receive praise and acknowledgement for small, simple strides
- For adults to be open to learning from youth and providing youth with harm reduction strategies and safety planning that align with their current stage of readiness

Where youth workers see opportunities:

- Increase frequency of contact with youth; try to stay in touch with youth on the run
- Include youth in decision making, seek and listen to their input
- Find more opportunities to offer options
- Keep the door open for contact, for youth to ask for help, for connecting youth to services, etc.
- Re-frame youth actions to increase opportunities for affirmation
- Help youth connect with more informal supports and interests
- Collaborate across disciplines
- Stay curious/less judgment about how youth meet their needs (physical & emotional)
- Not take personally actions of youth in difficult situations; stay reflective about relationship dynamics with youth

Youth report positive change looks like:

- Beginning to communicate more openly about their wants, needs, and in general the things they are up to
- Engaging in medical care
- Making themselves more available to adults
- Showing up at school, team meetings, other appts even when they are “missing”
- Returning more frequently OR being gone for shorter periods of time
- Setting more boundaries online/social media/phone use
- Acting/appearing “more like themselves,” like their age, less “grown”
- Using survival strategies to stay safe, when previously they may not have been (i.e. alias, not using drugs received, attn. to surroundings, telling someone where they are/when they will be back)

Youth workers see resilience & protective measures when youth:

- Has a positive, unconditional relationship with caregiver/significant adult
- Is well connected in the community; generally resourceful
- Has strong boundaries around sex/sexual relationships
- Is motivated by the idea of achievement, personal goals
- Is a leader by nature
- Demonstrates use of a safety plan, reaches out to someone for help when in a difficult situation
- Has self-awareness about being taken advantage of/associates risk
- Becomes more attentive to hygiene, general care of self, increased self-esteem
- Acts/appears more like their age, less like an adult/mature appearance
- Demonstrates/engages in problem solving
- Begins to show up at school, appts, activities

Then this:

resilience, protective actions guide, something action-oriented - "finding your strengths" - youth "response-oriented" adults

Give options and choices. Not text boxes overall checkboxes, multiple choices convey that youth can choose what to fill out and set aside some answers

Language options - sex/human trafficking - youth who trade sex - sex trading behavior - survival sex - sex work - youth that traffick themselves - prostituting themselves - pimped out - "young"

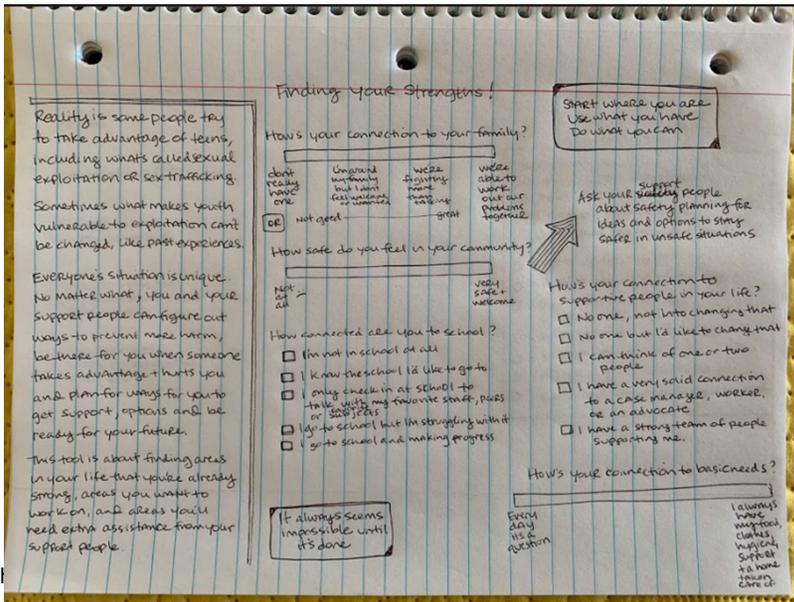
You might need to focus on building skills and increasing emotional health supports before a young person can fill this. Make sure you have these resources before this process.

Consider having a strong safety plan before this process

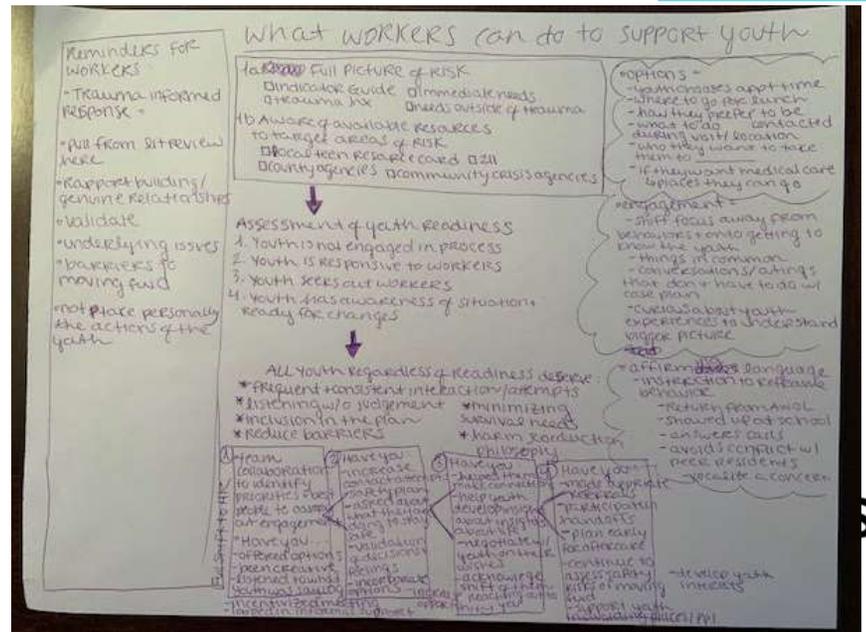
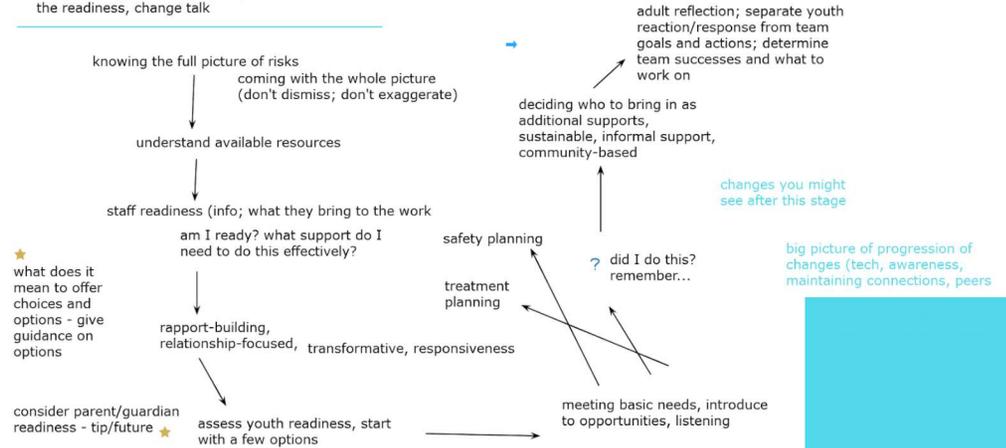
This tool is here to explore new options and increase positive actions and increase engagement. It's a continuum, find new opportunities to come back to the tool

validate the observations, this tool will build on people's understanding. Tangible practical options

emojis, graphics, arrows, back and forth movement, not linear, scales give a bar to shade in, search is always happening even when it's not obvious (vibes, notes)



what contributes to youth readiness - adults need guidance here, they miss the readiness, change talk



Building a Strong Team Response to HR & Trafficked Youth



Building a Strong Team Response to High Risk and Trafficked Youth

SIDE 1:

Prepare for effective use of tool through:

- Practice framework / shifting perspective
- Resource awareness / anticipated needs
- Refresher on skills & strategies

Key framework for effective use of tool

The current literature and existing reports on commercially sexually exploited (CSE) youth unanimously identify key areas of engagement essential for the providing effective care to impacted youth. This framework includes¹:

- Genuineness in our relationships and approaching each situation without judgment
- Addressing underlying/holistic needs outside the context of CSE
- Consistent use of validation and affirming language
- Reframing how we understand and react to youth actions/behaviors
- Seeking, including, and valuing youth voice and experience in the process
- Allowing youth to choose from reasonable options whenever possible

Users should also be mindful of the following while using this assessment²:

- Internal and external barriers to youth moving "forward"
- The ability to measure and count short incremental gains
- What options exist to adopt a philosophy of "safer" when "safest" is not a realistic option
- The ability to shift away from trying to change youths' minds about their actions/behaviors; and instead help them come to their own conclusions about decision making and the role of natural consequences
- Recognize the goal of meeting youth where they are at is to do just that and does not require or expect "forward" movement. Rather, acknowledges implementation of skills and strategies to enhance engagement as an intervention of its own

Sources: 1.) For complete list of references consulted, visit: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/abt/toolkit> 2.) California Department of Social Services Harm Reductions Series for Social Workers, Notice No. I-28-19 3.) Nichols, A.J., Edmond, T. & Hall, E.C. (2018). Social work practice with survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (pp. 51-69). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Do you have ...

- Full picture of risk:
 - WI Indicator & Response Guide
 - Immediate needs and/or physical safety considerations
 - Full scope of trauma history
 - Needs outside of CSE/trauma history
- Awareness of available resources to target identified areas of risk:
 - Local teen resource card
 - 2-1-1 or local task force
 - County/state based agencies
 - Local crisis response agencies

Engagement

- Stay curious and open to hearing any response vs. questioning for certain responses or "accuracy" (i.e. "tell me more about what you meant by that;" "I can tell you're having a hard time staying here. Can we talk about what's going on so we can maybe figure out some other options or how to make this better?")
- Offer personal connection through appropriate self-disclosure or shared experience; look for common ground in past or present that might resonate with a young person
- Prioritize basic needs before expecting further connection: when did the youth last sleep, eat, shower, or use the bathroom
- Take youth to new places, show them new things, spend time together, etc.
- Get to know youth outside of their involvement in high risk behavior/trafficking, trauma history, or other adverse situation due to which you became involved

Options

- Allow simple choices: Timing of visits/appts, where to go for meal together, who they prefer to take them to appt, opportunity to decline something but choose an alternative, etc
- Create non-consequential options that aren't ultimatums. For example, instead of: "if you choose not to go to school, I won't take you to group afterwards;" try something like: "don't forget I am picking you up after school for group today. Would you like me to get you right from school or at the group home?"
- Input on bigger decisions: "I know this group home isn't working out for you and we need some time to figure out what other options there are. While we figure that out together, do you have any thoughts on people or places I should be looking into?"

Affirming Language

- "I noticed you _____, & did not _____. I could tell you were _____."
- "When you _(positive action)_, it really made _____ feel included"
- "You showed commitment by coming here today"
- "I was really happy when I saw you at _____ the other day"
- "I noticed you haven't been spending as much time with/at _(negative influence)_. You're clearly prioritizing your safety."
- Acknowledge a difficult decision that was made even in a typically undesirable context: "I know how hard you've been working on cutting weed & that put you in a tough spot when your friends invited you to smoke. It took courage for you to be honest with me about it."
- Recognition for return (pos. action/behavior), rather than disappointment for leaving (neg. action/behavior).

The ability to respond to and support youth dynamically at their varying stages of readiness; recognizing this as fluid, not linear³, is an essential next step in the engagement process and may present: 1) outside the "cycle" of change 2) contemplation of the concern 3) preparation for change/leaving 4) action: the initial stages of exit 5) maintenance/cont'd support 6) relapse/return: normal part of a longer process that still requires support and validation of strengths and growth

see back for next steps

SIDE 2:

Response guided by assessed stage of youth readiness (referenced in blue box side 1)

- Informed by the literature (references available) and focus group input
- Bolded terms correspond with key strategies on side 1
- Recommended verbiage in the “spirit” of Motivational Interviewing; shifts focus from worker feelings to affirming youth actions

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Actions to Support Engagement

- 1. Youth is not currently engaged in process or responsive to adults**
- Separate youth actions from personal work; establish one’s own support outlets through consultation and supervision
 - Identify priorities as a team and best people to carry out engagement, including informal supports
 - Re-affirm each person’s unique role and responsibility on team and with youth
 - Identify traits of positive adult relationship(s) youth does have; consider ways to replicate traits across team members
 - Determine alternative means of communication that exist within different roles (i.e. messaging)
 - Identify where flexibility exists to promote engagement: short term vs. long term placement options, non-placement adult/relative supports, utilize non-traditional supports
 - Take a full shift towards harm reduction² approach: safer vs safest; recognize how youth may choose to meet needs without alternative options
 - Offer youth options in each [attempted] interaction
 - Listen to what youth is saying
 - Incentivize meeting with team member(s)
 - Always keep the door open for youth to return/call; consistently message this

- 2. Youth is responsive to team members/adults**
- Consider what needs are likely met through exploitive situations; explore other options that exist to fill certain areas of need: physical safety, emotional safety, independence, love, companionship, money, substance use/ self- medicating, hormones, etc.
 - Increase contact/outreach attempts
 - Start safety planning with youth: ask about things they are doing to stay safe/reduce risk of harm
 - Validate/affirm youth decisions and feelings
 - Continue to incorporate use of options
 - Begin increasing/exposing youth to opportunities
 - Offer medical care routinely; assist youth in connecting to appropriate primary care provider they are comfortable with

- 3. Youth sometimes reaches out independently to team/adults**
- Consistently offer resources and services, even ones youth has previously declined
 - Help youth make connections to community based agencies and informal supports, such as an advocate, mentor, and other credible adults
 - Work with youth to develop their own insights about their lives/situations
 - Learn from youth about what prompts their leaving home/placement (i.e. leaving something, going to, or both)
 - Negotiate (within reason) youth wishes and preferences
 - Acknowledge and affirm shift of youth beginning to reach out to you/team members on their own
 - Work to understand why youth may have chosen the person(s) they have to begin reaching out to. Can these types of connections be replicated in other areas in their lives?
 - Continue exposures to opportunities (increased time together or engaged in pro-social activities results in less time to be on the run or engaging in high risk situations)

- 4. Youth expresses awareness of their situation; shares insights**
- Make more intentional efforts around connections to an advocate and community based resources: youth drop-in spaces, shelters, street outreach, safe recreational spaces like Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.
 - Begin to explore with youth needs currently met through exploitive situations; address what you can tangibly provide to offset needs
 - Offer formal support/service options: evidence based therapy (TF-CBT, EMDR) or evidence informed group work (Ending the Game, My Life My Choice, other curriculums offered locally)
 - Thoughtfully explore with youth barriers/ambivalence to follow through on a choice, commitment, or goal they made, but may be having a hard time with. What do they need to take the next step forward (internal & external motives)?

The goal of meeting youth where they are at, or in their current *stage of readiness*, is to do just that. It does not require “forward” movement. Implementation of the following skills & strategies should be considered a form of intervention.

- 5. Youth is both aware of situation and ready for change to occur or already in process**
- Pro-active outreach with advocate/community based agency to assure effective collaboration on youth needs
 - Explore with youth where they are at with technology/cell phones and realistically what kinds of support or boundaries are needed to promote safety (i.e. utilizing location/tracking, adjusting privacy settings, deleting accounts/apps, turning in phone at night, limited use of phone, giving up phone entirely, etc.)
 - Actively address needs youth has identified as being met through exploitive situations (tangibly and with support services)
 - Assess with youth totality of treatment/intervention needs; together prioritize where to start: AODA, mental health stabilization, homelessness/severe family conflict, trauma symptoms, acute medical needs, legal issues, etc.
 - Partner with youth to promote success in the options they have chosen; actively address anything that may be interfering (internal & external factors)
 - Observe and affirm youth beginning to create distance between themselves and an exploitive person or situation
 - Recognize this is as a highly vulnerable and fragile stage in youth readiness; awareness of the imminent chance of relapse

- 6. Youth has had period(s) of incremental change, but is currently experiencing a setback**
- Recognize setbacks as normal part of transition out of the life; unconditionally support youth through these periods
 - Normalize to youth this experience and affirm their continued commitment to change. Consider sharing normalizing facts and data about relapse
 - Draw from other areas of readiness to respond to relapse, re-vamp engagement strategies, allow flexibility in case planning, understand exit/behavior change as a fluid, non-linear process
 - Appreciate that this is a long term journey for high risk/trafficked youth with expected setbacks, lapse in engagement/readiness, integral need for current team members to maintain involvement throughout, and requirement of warm handoffs as team members change and other transitions occur

Start here

Start with the Building a Strong Team Response tool → Reframe the conversation.

Be aware of resources

Use when the team is unsure, feeling stuck, in transition, just getting started

Use when the team / youth is experiencing incremental change to determine what might be next.

Use before a team meeting to prepare, during a team meeting to focus the conversation, preparing for court or other important meetings

Complement to other tools. Not a replacement.

Re-visit this tool as often as needed.



Key framework

Effective use of tool

Key framework for effective use of tool

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Full picture of risk and awareness of resources

Find info first

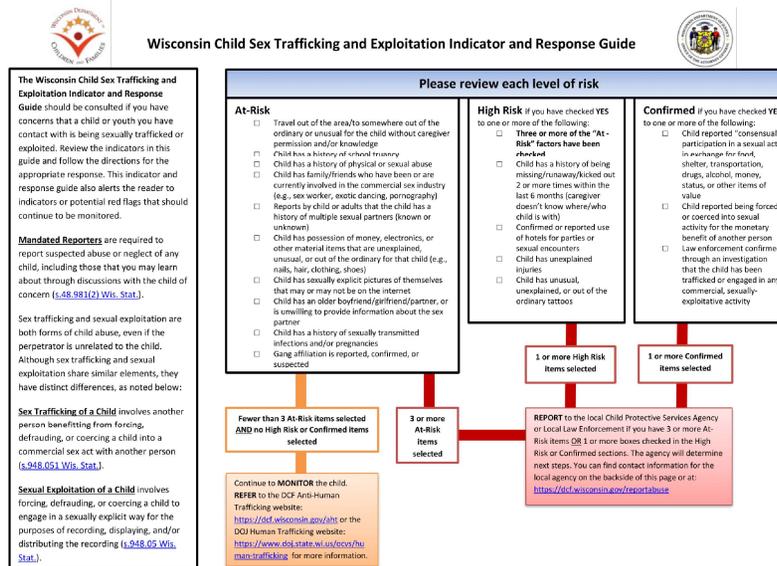
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2. Awareness of available resources to target identified areas of risk:

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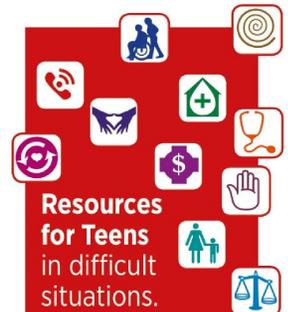


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Effective May 2017
Updated September 2019

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Some of these places won't report you if you have run away, have a warrant, or are AWOL. Some places are required by law to report concerns for youth safety to police or social services.

Ask what these places can keep confidential.

Engagement

Specific examples

Engagement

- Stay curious and open to hearing any response vs. questioning for certain responses or “accuracy” (i.e. “tell me more about what you meant by that;” “I can tell you’re having a hard time staying here. Can we talk about what’s going on so we can maybe figure out some other options or how to make this better?”)
- Offer personal connection through appropriate self-disclosure or shared experience; look for common ground in past or present that might resonate with a young person
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- Get to know youth outside of their involvement in high risk behavior/trafficking, trauma history, or other adverse situation due to which you became involved



Options

Connection to motivational interviewing

Options

- Allow simple choices: Timing of visits/appts, where to go for meal together, who they prefer to take them to appt, opportunity to decline something but choose an alternative, etc
- Create non-consequential options that aren't ultimatums. For example, instead of: *"if you choose not to go to school, I won't take you to group afterwards;"* try something like: *"don't forget I am picking you up after school for group today. Would you like me to get you right from school or at the group home?"*
- Input on bigger decisions: *"I know this group home isn't working out for you and we need some time to figure out what other options there are. While we figure that out together, do you have any thoughts on people or places I should be looking into?"*



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Affirming Language

Helpful phrases

Affirming Language

- "I noticed you _____, & did not _____. I could tell you were _____."
- "When you *_(positive action)_*, it really made _____ feel included"
- "You showed commitment by coming here today"
- "I was really happy when I saw you at _____ the other day"
- "I noticed you haven't been spending as much time with/at *_(negative influence)_*. You're clearly prioritizing your safety."
- Acknowledge a difficult decision that was made even in a typically undesirable context: *"I know how hard you've been working on cutting weed & that put you in a tough spot when your friends invited you to smoke. It took courage for you to be honest with me about it."*
- Recognition for return (pos. action/behavior), rather than disappointment for leaving (neg. action/behavior).



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Stages of readiness

Fluid, not linear

The ability to respond to and support youth dynamically at their varying **stages of readiness**; recognizing this as **fluid**, not linear³, is an essential next step in the engagement process and may present:

- 1) outside the "cycle" of change
- 2) contemplation of the concern
- 3) preparation for change/leaving
- 4) action: the initial stages of exit
- 5) maintenance/cont'd support
- 6) relapse/return: normal part of a longer process that still requires support and validation of strengths and growth

[see back for next steps](#)



Actions to Support Engagement

Stages of readiness

Actions to Support Engagement

1 Youth is not currently engaged in process or responsive to adults

- Separate youth actions from personal work; establish one's own support outlets through consultation and supervision
- Identify priorities as a team and best people to carry out engagement, including informal supports
- Re-affirm each person's unique role and responsibility on team and with youth
- Identify traits of positive adult relationship(s) youth does have; consider ways to replicate traits across team members
- Determine alternative means of communication that exist within different roles (i.e. messaging)
- Identify where flexibility exists to promote engagement: short term vs. long term placement options, non-placement adult/relative supports, utilize non-traditional supports
- Take a full shift towards harm reduction² approach: safer vs safest; recognize how youth may choose to meet needs without alternative options
- Offer youth options in each [attempted] interaction
- Listen to what youth is saying
- Incentivize meeting with team member(s)
- Always keep the door open for youth to return/call; consistently message this

2 Youth is responsive to team members/adults

- Consider what needs are likely met through exploitive situations; explore other options that exist to fill certain areas of need: physical safety, emotional safety, independence, love, companionship, money, substance use/ self-medicating, hormones, etc.
- Increase contact/outreach attempts
- Start safety planning with youth: ask about things they are doing to stay safe/reduce risk of harm
- Validate/affirm youth decisions and feelings
- Continue to incorporate use of options
- Begin increasing/exposing youth to opportunities
- Offer medical care routinely; assist youth in connecting to appropriate primary care provider they are comfortable with

3 Youth sometimes reaches out independently to team/adults

- Consistently offer resources and services, even ones youth has previously declined
- Help youth make connections to community based agencies and informal supports, such as an advocate, mentor, and other credible adults
- Work with youth to develop their own insights about their lives/situations
- Learn from youth about what prompts their leaving home/placement (i.e. leaving something, going to, or both)
- Negotiate (within reason) youth wishes and preferences
- Acknowledge and affirm shift of youth beginning to reach out to you/team members on their own
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- Continue exposures to opportunities (increased time together or engaged in pro-social activities results in less time to be on the run or engaging in high risk situations)

4 Youth expresses awareness of their situation; shares insights

- Make more intentional efforts around connections to an advocate and community based resources: youth drop-in spaces, shelters, street outreach, safe recreational spaces like Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.
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- Thoughtfully explore with youth barriers/ambivalence to follow through on a choice, commitment, or goal they made, but may be having a hard time with. What do they need to take the next step forward (internal & external motives)?

The goal of meeting youth where they are at, or in their current stage of readiness, is to do just that. It does not require "forward" movement. Implementation of the following skills & strategies should be considered a form of intervention.

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- Partner with youth to promote success in the options they have chosen, actively address anything that may be interfering (internal & external factors)
- Observe and affirm youth beginning to create distance between themselves and an exploitive person or situation
- Recognize this is as a highly vulnerable and fragile stage in youth readiness; awareness of the imminent chance of relapse

6 Youth has had period(s) of incremental change, but is currently experiencing a setback

- Recognize setbacks as normal part of transition out of the life; unconditionally support youth through these periods
- Normalize to youth this experience and affirm their continued commitment to change. Consider sharing normalizing facts and data about relapse
- Draw from other areas of readiness to respond to relapse, re-vamp engagement strategies, allow flexibility in case planning, understand exit/behavior change as a fluid, non-linear process
- Appreciate that this is a long term journey for high risk/trafficked youth with expected setbacks, lapse in engagement/readiness, integral need for current team members to maintain involvement throughout, and requirement of warm handoffs as team members change and other transitions occur



Unengaged or unresponsive

Plenty of work for teams to do

1. Youth is not currently engaged in process or responsive to adults

- ❑ Separate youth actions from personal work; establish one's own support outlets through consultation and supervision
- ❑ Identify priorities as a team and best people to carry out **engagement**, including informal supports
- ❑ Re-affirm each person's unique role and responsibility on team and with youth
- ❑ Identify traits of positive adult relationship(s) youth does have; consider ways to replicate traits across team members
- ❑ Determine alternative means of communication that exist within different roles (i.e. messaging)
- ❑ Identify where flexibility exists to promote **engagement**: short term vs. long term placement options, non-placement adult/relative supports, utilize non-traditional supports
- ❑ Take a full shift towards harm reduction² approach: safer vs safest; recognize how youth may choose to meet needs without alternative **options**
- ❑ Offer youth **options** in each [attempted] interaction
- ❑ Listen to what youth is saying
- ❑ Incentivize meeting with team member(s)
- ❑ Always keep the door open for youth to return/call; consistently message this



Responsive or sometimes reaches out

Affirming and offering options

2. Youth is responsive to team members / adults

- ❑ Consider what needs are likely met through exploitive situations; explore other **options** that exist to fill certain areas of need: physical safety, emotional safety, independence, love, companionship, money, substance use/ self- medicating, hormones, etc.
- ❑ Increase contact/outreach attempts
- ❑ Start safety planning with youth: ask about things they are doing to stay safe/reduce risk of harm
- ❑ Validate/**affirm** youth decisions and feelings
- ❑ Continue to incorporate use of **options**
- ❑ Begin increasing/exposing youth to opportunities
- ❑ Offer medical care routinely; assist youth in connecting to appropriate primary care provider they are comfortable with

3. Youth sometimes reaches out independently to team/adults

- ❑ Consistently offer resources and services, even ones youth has previously declined
- ❑ Help youth make connections to community based agencies and informal supports, such as an advocate, mentor, and other credible adults
- ❑ Work with youth to develop their own insights about their lives/situations
- ❑ Learn from youth about what prompts their leaving home/placement (i.e. leaving something, going to, or both)
- ❑ Negotiate (within reason) youth wishes and preferences
- ❑ Acknowledge and **affirm** shift of youth beginning to reach out to you/team members on their own
- ❑ Work to understand why youth may have chosen the person(s) they have to begin reaching out to. Can these types of connections be replicated in other areas in their lives?
- ❑ Continue exposures to opportunities (increased time together or engaged in pro-social activities results in less time to be on the run or engaging in high risk situations)

Expresses awareness, insights

Stepping up; impact of ambivalence

4. Youth expresses awareness of their situation; shares insights

- ❑ Make more intentional efforts around connections to an advocate and community based resources: youth drop-in spaces, shelters, street outreach, safe recreational spaces like Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.
- ❑ Begin to explore with youth needs currently met through exploitive situations; address what you can tangibly provide to offset needs
- ❑ Offer formal support/service **options**: evidence based therapy (TF-CBT, EMDR) or evidence informed group work (Ending the Game, My Life My Choice, other curriculums offered locally)
- ❑ Thoughtfully explore with youth barriers/ambivalence to follow through on a choice, commitment, or goal they made, but may be having a hard time with. What do they need to take the next step forward (internal & external motives)?



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Aware and ready for change, prepare for setbacks

Long journey

5. Youth is both aware of situation and ready for change to occur or already in process

- Pro-active outreach with advocate/community based agency to assure effective collaboration on youth needs
- Explore with youth where they are at with technology/cell phones and realistically what kinds of support or boundaries are needed to promote safety (i.e. utilizing location/tracking, adjusting privacy settings, deleting accounts/apps, turning in phone at night, limited use of phone, giving up phone entirely, etc.)
- Actively address needs youth has identified as being met through exploitive situations (tangibly and with support services)
- Assess with youth totality of treatment/intervention needs; together prioritize where to start: AODA, mental health stabilization, homelessness/severe family conflict, trauma symptoms, acute medical needs, legal issues, etc.
- Partner with youth to promote success in the options they have chosen; actively address anything that may be interfering (internal & external factors)
- Observe and **affirm** youth beginning to create distance between themselves and an exploitive person or situation
- Recognize this is as a highly vulnerable and fragile stage in youth readiness; awareness of the imminent chance of relapse

6. Youth has had period(s) of incremental change, but is currently experiencing a setback

- Recognize setbacks as normal part of transition out of the life; unconditionally support youth through these periods
- Normalize to youth this experience and **affirm** their continued commitment to change. Consider sharing normalizing facts and data about relapse
- Draw from other areas of readiness to respond to relapse, re-vamp engagement strategies, allow flexibility in case planning, understand exit/behavior change as a fluid, non-linear process
- Appreciate that this is a long term journey for high risk/trafficked youth with expected setbacks, lapse in **engagement/**readiness, integral need for current team members to maintain involvement throughout, and requirement of warm handoffs as team members change and other transitions occur



Change isn't linear.

Prepare to learn more with each effort.

The goal of meeting youth where they are at, or in their current *stage of readiness*, is to do just that. It does not require "forward" movement. Implementation of the following skills & strategies should be considered a form of intervention.



Rolling with resistance

- Make it routine.
- Focus on one part at a time.
- Use the tool yourself as a team member or with a supervisor.
- Guide the conversation with ideas from the tool.
- Leave it with team members to look at on their own.
- Team members may not be able to do different recommendations. You can find other supports.
- Find what resonates with a resistant team member.
- Ask us for guidance.

Finding Your Strengths!



SIDE 1:

Ideally provided to youth by an adult/youth worker who can also have a follow up conversation with them

- Familiar like a worksheet at school,
- Responses like a magazine quiz
- Intended to maximize opportunities for youth to identify strengths and specific support needs in various areas of life



Finding Your Strengths!

> Fill out whatever is comfortable for you.

* Today's date: _____

This worksheet is about finding areas of your life where you're already strong and areas you want to improve.

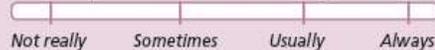
Some areas you'll need extra assistance from your support people. *That's okay!* Everyone needs some extra support at some points in their life.

Support can mean:

- people who care about you trying to prevent harm from happening at all.
- people stepping up for you when someone has taken advantage and hurt you.
- people sharing ways to be safer when you're not ready for big changes.
- people staying with you to help you find healing, options and connections that help you grow.

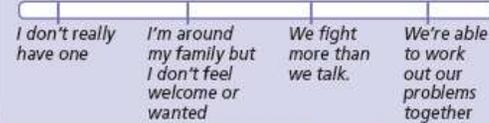
1 Everyone needs food, a safe place to be, clothes, hygiene supplies & other basic needs. Do you get your basic needs met?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



2 How's your connection to your family?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



3 How's school going?

- I'm not enrolled in school at all.
- I know the school I'd like to go to.
- I only stop by school for lunch or to talk with my favorite teacher, staff member or friends.
- I go to school, but I'm have a hard time going every day and/or to every class.
- I go to school and I'm making progress.
- School is going great for me.



5 How's your connection to supportive people in your life? Choose as many as true for you.

- I don't have anyone like that.
- I don't have anyone, but I'd like to change that.
- I can think of one or more friends who support me.
- I have someone special in my life who supports me.
- I'm close to family members who support me.
- I have a mentor, group leader, faith community, coach, or someone else in the community who supports me.
- I have a good connection with my case manager or worker who supports me in meeting my goals.
- I have an anti-violence advocate who offers options, information on my rights and ways to get my voice heard.
- I have a strong team of people supporting me.



6 Write a few things you're interested in learning about or doing:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4 What do you think would be helpful for you to be the most successful in school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

7 How's your connection to healthcare?

- I don't go unless I have an emergency.
- I see my doctor when someone else makes my appointments.
- I ask questions when I visit a healthcare provider to make sure I know what's happening and they know what I want.
- I make sure to follow up on test results, medication, and advice from the healthcare provider.
- I make my own healthcare appointments & know how to reach someone for health questions on my own.



SIDE 2:

- Usable by a range of reading/comprehension levels
- Provides additional context for users on why they are receiving this
- Presents opportunities to learn more about trafficking/exploitation
- Empowers youth to identify and be aware of resources available
- Applicable in a variety of settings

We made this worksheet, and a companion guide for adults, for an important reason that might surprise you. Everyone has strengths and struggles. It turns out that people who take sexual advantage of teens look for youth who are struggling and use that to get close.

You might have heard people use words like sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, or survival sex to describe this.

We also know that young people do everything they can to protect themselves. You are strong in many ways. We want to make sure people know that about you.

Teens will also have things that make them vulnerable to exploitation. Sometimes what makes us vulnerable to exploiters can't be changed, like past experiences.

Sometimes what makes us vulnerable can change if we recognize it and figure out different options. Everyone's situation is unique. No matter what, you deserve support and options.



When you feel ready, share your responses with the supportive person who gave you this worksheet.

★ Would you like to know more about how to protect yourself from exploiters who try to take advantage of youth?

Yes. No, not now.

Important numbers:

2-1-1 call for resources in your WI zip code

National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-RUNAWAY

Add your local support numbers here:

.....

8 How safe do you feel in your community?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you

Not safe at all |-----| Very safe and welcome

9 How do you keep yourself safer?

.....

Figure out ideas and options with your support people to stay safer in your life. This is called **safety planning**.

Phones can be complicated.

10 How can having a phone help you be safer?

.....

11 How can having a phone make you less safe?

.....

12 For teens with caseworkers: How's your connection with your caseworker?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you

I don't answer their calls	I'll meet with them if they find me	I reach out to them when I need things	I'm available to them and we talk often
----------------------------	-------------------------------------	--	---

It seems like they don't ever answer my calls or get back to me	I know I can reach them, but have a hard time asking for things I want/ need	They are there for me when I need them to be	They check-in on me often
---	--	--	---------------------------

13 Which ones are true for you?

Fill in as many as you want to share.

- I stand up for myself.
- I defend others from bullies.
- I feel connected to my culture.
- I know about community resources.
- I have goals for my future.
- I believe in myself.
- I know my family has got my back.
- I'm a positive influence on others.
- I'm connected to my community.
- I express myself thru art, writing or music.
- I know and use ways to calm myself.
-

14 What do you need extra support on that we haven't covered here?

.....

Don't let the past steal your present.
 ~ Cherrie Moraga

Thank you for filling this out - we believe in you!

Everyone needs support

Introducing the tool to youth



Finding Your Strengths!

This worksheet is about finding areas of your life where you're already strong and areas you want to improve.

Some areas you'll need extra assistance from your support people. *That's okay!* Everyone needs some extra support at some points in their life.



Basic needs met

1 Everyone needs food, a safe place to be, clothes, hygiene supplies & other basic needs. **Do you get your basic needs met?**

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



Not really

Sometimes

Usually

Always



Family connection

It's up to the youth to define family.

2 How's your connection to your family?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



I don't really have one

I'm around my family but I don't feel welcome or wanted

We fight more than we talk.

We're able to work out our problems together



School connection

Youth can check more than one option.

3 How's school going?

- I'm not enrolled in school at all.
- I know the school I'd like to go to.
- I only stop by school for lunch or to talk with my favorite teacher, staff member or friends.
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4 What do you think would be helpful for you to be the most successful in school?

.....

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.....

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.....

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Supportive people in your life

Options to choose

5

How's your connection to supportive people in your life? *Choose as many as true for you.*

- I don't have anyone like that.
- I don't have anyone, but I'd like to change that.
- I can think of one or more friends who support me.
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- I'm close to family members who support me.
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- people sharing ways to be safer when you're not ready for big changes.
- people staying with you to help you find healing, options and connections that help you grow.



Open spaces for responses

Balancing out checklists and open spaces

6

Write a few things you're interested in learning about or doing:

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

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Children's
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Healthcare connection

7 How's your connection to healthcare?

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- I make my own healthcare appointments & know how to reach someone for health questions on my own.



Back side

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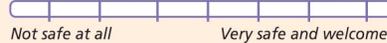
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Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



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Phones can be complicated.

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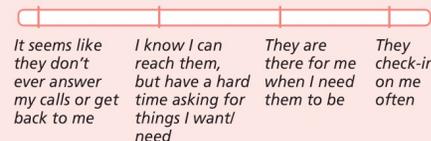
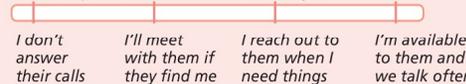
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11 How can having a phone make you less safe?

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12 For teens with caseworkers: How's your connection with your caseworker?

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- I have goals for my future.
- I believe in myself.
- I know my family has got my back.
- I'm a positive influence on others.
- I'm connected to my community.
- I express myself thru art, writing or music.
- I know and use ways to calm myself.
-



14 What do you need extra support on that we haven't covered here?

.....

Don't let the past steal your present.

~ Cherrie Moraga

Thank you for filling this out - we believe in you!

Talking about exploitation

Using language that works.

Be prepared if youth want more info.

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Would you like to know more about how to protect yourself from exploiters who try to take advantage of youth?

Yes. No, not now.



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Resource numbers

Best numbers will vary

Important numbers:

2-1-1 call for resources in your WI zip code

National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-RUNAWAY

Add your local support numbers here:

.....

.....



Safety

8 How safe do you feel in your community?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you

Not safe at all

Very safe and welcome

9 How do you keep yourself safer?

.....

.....

.....

Figure out ideas and options with your support people to stay safer in your life. This is called **safety planning**.



Access to phones

Opportunities for conversation

Phones can be complicated.

10 How can having a phone help you be safer?

.....

.....

.....



11 How can having a phone make you less safe?

.....

.....



Caseworker connections

12

For teens with caseworkers: How's your connection with your caseworker?

Shade in up to the level that makes sense to you



*I don't
answer
their calls*

*I'll meet
with them if
they find me*

*I reach out to
them when I
need things*

*I'm available
to them and
we talk often*



*It seems like
they don't
ever answer
my calls or get
back to me*

*I know I can
reach them,
but have a hard
time asking for
things I want/
need*

*They are
there for me
when I need
them to be*

*They
check-in
on me
often*



Resilience

Even when we go thru difficult experiences, we have qualities inside us that help us bounce back.

13 Which ones are true for you?

Fill in as many as you want to share.



- I stand up for myself.
- I defend others from bullies.
- I feel connected to my culture.
- I know about community resources.
- I have goals for my future.
- I believe in myself.
- I know my family has got my back.
- I'm a positive influence on others.
- I'm connected to my community.
- I express myself thru art, writing or music.
- I know and use ways to calm myself.
-



Extra support

14 What do you need extra support on that we haven't covered here?

Don't let the past steal your present.
~ Cherríe Moraga

Thank you for filling this out – we believe in you!



More to consider

Make sure it's voluntary

Review your mandated reporting process and what answers might initiate a report.

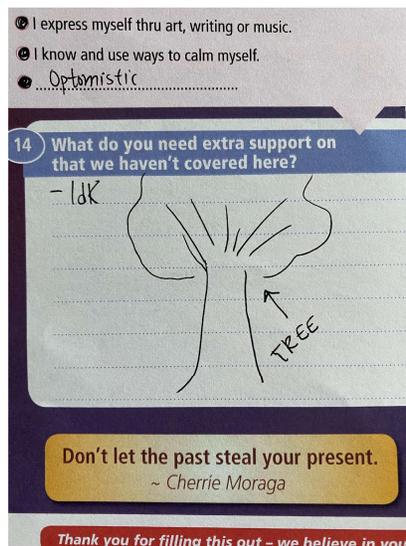
Get permission from youth to share responses.

Empower youth to use strengths they've identified in court and other official meetings and share what's going well.

This tool doesn't cover everything that could be relevant to young people who've been trafficked or are at high risk.

We will be learning about how this tool works in practice. We need to hear from *you* about what works and what's challenging.

Rolling with resistance



- Reflect on the timing
- Pull back and wait for another time.
- Consider if another person on the team may be better positioned to introduce the tool.
- Offer to work on it together.
- Ask if there are parts that are easier to fill out. Stress that youth can fill out as many or as few as they want.

Is there a way to use these tools wrong?

- Focus placed on risks, needs, or concerns one has without elevating the strengths the young person has identified. **This tool is about finding strengths!**
- It is not a scientific measurement. The tool is evidence-informed, but not a validated assessment.
- It should never be used against a young person. Youth will regret sharing, and other youth will hear about that experience and feel similarly guarded.
- When adults ask questions, but don't respond when youth share needs.



Practical Applications

- Safety planning
 - Preparation for home visiting, passes / increased free time in the community, youth
 - General ideas for safety planning for providers working with runaway and homeless youth
- Demonstration of growth over course of treatment or implementation of new engagement strategies and resources
- Targeted case or treatment planning around both risk reduction and goal attainment
- Encourage youth voice, perspective, and self-advocacy during care planning, team meetings, or court proceedings



Contact
Information
Technical
assistance,
resource
inquiries, follow
up needs

- Rebekah Dettmann
 - rdettmann@chw.org
 - Milwaukee CAC main: 414-277-8980
 - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/aht>
- Claudine O’Leary
 - Claudine@rethinkresources.net
 - 414-212-5121
- PDFs available for download at:
 - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ys/aht/toolkit>

Thank You!

