

# **FAMILY CENTERED SCREENING**

## **QUESTION BANK**

### **Child Welfare Academy**

A partnership of the  
University of Maryland School of Social Work and the  
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## **Special Thanks To**

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Caren Kaplan, MSW—Innovations in Child Welfare  
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## Reason for Referral/General Information

- What is the concern causing the report?
- Where is the child now?
- When were the children last seen and by whom?
- Where is the alleged perpetrator now?
- How long has this been occurring/ have you been concerned? Have things stayed about the same, become worse or improved? Is the child reporting how often this occurs?
- How did the reporter come to know this information? Does anyone else know about the maltreatment?
- What school does the child attend and how long are they there?
- Are there any weapons in the home or known to be carried by the family or accused abuser?
- Is there a history of violence, drugs, mental illness or retaliation in the family?
- Are there any other environmental hazards in the home (vicious animals, meth labs, criminal activity etc.)?
- Who else lives in the home?
- Are there other children in the home?

## Referral Type Specific Questions

### **Neglect (Basic Needs/Environment/Dirty Home)**

- What specifically did the reporter see?
- Description of child's condition and what they have been exposed to.
- What does the child mean by "no food in the home?" Is there no food at all (cupboards, refrigerator/freezer bare) or no food the child wants to eat?
- Does the child have food to eat elsewhere (school/neighbor)? When did the child last eat? Does the family use community resources to assist them with food?
- When was the last time you were in the home?
- Explain what you mean by "deplorable/nasty?" Can you walk me through the house and describe each room to me? Is there any room in the home clean?
- Observations of parent's behaviors.
- When was the last time the home was clean/in order?
- Are there cleaning supplies in the home?
- Does the family have alternative means for lack of utilities? If so, what are they?
- Does the family go to a friend/neighbor to bathe/eat?

### **Lack of Supervision**

- Are they alone now?
- How often and what time of day does it occur?
- How long is the child(ren) left alone?
- Do they know where the parent goes at these times?

- Does the child have access to a phone? Do they know who to contact in case of an emergency? Is the parent easily accessible to the child by phone or in person?
- Are the children asking for help, or seem scared to be alone?
- What is the child's level of functioning?

### **Drug Allegation**

- How do you know the parent is using drugs? Have you observed them using drugs or alcohol? If so, when was the last time?
- How often does the parent use alcohol/drugs? When was the last time you saw the parent not using alcohol/ drugs/ sober?
- How does the alcohol/drug use affect the parent? Is the parent impaired/unable to function?
- What substance is the parent using?
- How does the drug/substance use impact the parent's ability to care for the child? Is the parent able to meet the child's daily needs (food, clothing, shelter, supervision etc.)? Describe.
- What is the impact on the child?
- Is the substance accessible to the child?
- How long has the parent been using? Is the parent experiencing stressors in their life right now?
- Is there a second adult assisting in caregiving?

### **Drug Exposed Child**

- Is the mother still at the hospital? Who else is at the hospital?
- Has a toxicology screen been ordered? Types and levels of drugs present?
- Does mom have a place to go? Do they have a car seat and other supplies

- How long will the child remain in the hospital?

### **Mental Injury**

- What is being said to the child or what did they witness?
- When, where and how often does this occur?
- How is the child being affected?

### **Domestic Violence**

- Is the arguing/fighting verbal or physical? Can you describe the domestic violence?
- How often does the violence occur? When was the last incident?
- Where were the children during the incident?
- Was the child(ren) physically harmed during the incident?
- Were the police called?
- Who called 9-1-1 and at what time? Were any charges filed or was either parent incarcerated?
- Was the child(ren) physically injured?
- Did child(ren) make any statements about how they feel regarding what occurred?

### **Physical Abuse/Physical Discipline**

- Did the reporter see the injury? What does it look like? Where on the child's body is the injury?
- Is medical intervention necessary?
- What was the situation that caused the injury?
- Has this happened before? Have you noticed any similar injuries on siblings?
- What does the child mean by the word, "beat/hit/whooped?" What did the child describe?
- What is normal parenting practice for the family?

## **Youth In Conflict**

- What specific behaviors have you seen that worry you about this youth?
- How often are these behaviors occurring?
- When was the last time you observed it?
- Have you contacted the parents about this? Their response?
- Describe what you know about the youth's friends. Gang involved? Drugs/alcohol?
- Is the youth attending school?
- Has the youth runaway? How many times? How long are they gone when they run?
- Are there other agencies involved such as the courts, DJS or therapists?
- How are the youth's behaviors affecting the family?
- Does the youth have any informal supports such as mentors and/or close friends or family?

## **Sexual Abuse**

- What, when, who, where and how often?
- Did anyone else witness the incident?
- Have law enforcement been notified? Have the parents been notified?
- Any physical indicators?
- Has the child made a direct disclosure? What was said?
- Is the child reporting they have been inappropriately touched before?
- What is the relationship to the perpetrator?

## Protective Factors/Strengths

### “What’s good?”

#### **Family Community/ Tangible Supports**

- How long has the family lived in the community?
- How long at the current address?
- Does the family have a telephone, transportation?
- Are the adults in the home employed?
- Is the family receiving any public assistance?
- What supports does the parent/family have in place (family, friends, services, etc.)?
- Are the supports utilized by the parent/family?
- What is father’s involvement? How is the father/child and mother/father relationship?
- Does the family call on others to help solve problems? Who do they call upon?
- Are you familiar with any of the extended family? Who are they and how is their relationship with the family? What do they say?
- Are there aspects of your relationship with the family that, in conjunction with DSS intervention, might help influence them for the better?



### **Child Information/Child Functioning/ Special Needs/ Vulnerability**

- How would you describe the child (happy, sad, worried, tired, fun loving)?
- Does the child have any developmental delays or physical disabilities?
- How does the child do in school?
- Does the child have friends?
- What does the parent say about the child—how would they describe the child?
- What is exceptional or unique about this child(ren)?
- How does the child describe the situation in their home?
- What does the child like most about their family? About school?
- Does the child have any informal supports they rely on such as a teacher, mentor, coach, extended family member?

### **Family Coping/Strengths**

- Are the parents concerned about these problems? How did they react to you expressing concern?
- Describe how the family gets along.
- What does the parent do to ensure their child is safe?
- What are the positives of the parent/family? What would you say is good about mom/dad's parenting? What would the child say?
- Based on what you know, who would you say is in charge of the family?
- Are there times when the mother/father is attentive rather than neglectful? Can you tell me more about those times? What did the parents and child(ren) do instead?

- What do you think contributed to the parent responding differently?
- According to what you know, how did the non-offending parent react to what occurred? If this has happened before- how has the family addressed the situation?
- How does this parent/family unit solve problems? Have you observed the parent/family solve problems in the past? What have you seen them doing?
- Can you explain what is happening when the situation is okay? What is different about those times?

### **Mandated Reporter Working with the Child/Family**

- What are the issues/concerns that brought you to work with the child/family?
- What progress has the child/family made? What has gone well with the child/family
- Since you have been involved with the child/family what has changed?

# Solution Focused Questions

## Exception Finding

- Past Successes.
- Times when the problem could have occurred but did not
- Was there a time the family had a similar problem and handled it differently?
- Are there times when the Mother is attentive rather than neglectful?

## Miracle Question

- Visualize life without the current problems or challenges.
- Imagine life in a successful future.
- If you were no longer worried about this family, what would be different?

## Coping Question

- Resilience's, personal strengths and resources
- How does this family handle stress?
- Who is the family's support system?
- Does the youth have any informal supports such as mentors, and/or close friends of family?

## Relationship Question

- Looks at the situation from another person's perspectives.
- Is anyone else concerned about what you've observed/are reporting?
- How do the children feel about this situation?

# Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

## **Demeanor/Behavior**

- Does the child have any history of emotional, sexual or physical abuse?
- Are there any current mental health or substance abuse concerns?
- Has the child appeared withdrawn or lost interest in activities?
- Does the child appear disoriented or confused?
- Does the child show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Does the child have any current injuries or signs of physical abuse or torture?

## **Living/Working Conditions**

- Where does the child currently reside?
- Does the child feel safe in his/her current living environment?
- Is the child familiar with the community in which they reside?
- Does the child have a history of running away or on current runaway status?
- Has the child recently acquired expensive gifts, clothing, or other costly items?

- Does the child lack possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the child usually embark on frequent, sudden travel without notice?
- Does the child have freedom of movement? Can the child freely leave where they live?
- Do high security measures exist in the living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)?
- Does the child have access to identification documents?
- Does the child have access to medical care?

### **Work/Other Activities**

- Has the child stopped attending school?
- Does the child work?
- How does the child support his/herself?
- Does the child work excessively long and/or unusual hours?
- Does anyone control the child's money?
- Has the child ever worked (or done other activities that were different from what they were promised or told?
- Has the child ever been told to lie about his/her age?
- Has the child ever been tricked or pressured into doing something they did not want to do?
- Has anyone ever pressured the child to have any unwanted physical (or sexual) contact with another person?
- Does the child ever have sex for things of value (for example money, housing, food, gifts, or favors)?

## **Relationships**

- Does the child have an older, overly controlling or abusive boy/girlfriend?
- Is there any gang involvement?
- Does the child appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Is the child able to freely contact family, friends, or others?
- Is there child often in the company of someone to whom her or she defers?
- Has anyone ever harmed or threatened to harm the child or people close to them like family or friends?
- Has anyone ever threatened to report the child to the police or other authorities?

## **Foreign Born Nationals**

- Why did the child leave her/his country of origin?
- Did anyone arrange their travel to the U.S.?
- Did the people or child who arranged their travel pressure them to do anything?
- Did the child (or family) borrow or owe money, or something else, to anyone who helped them come to the U.S.?
- Does the child (or family) still have this debt, or does anyone claim that they do?
- If they did borrow or owe money, were they pressured to do anything that they didn't want to do to pay it back?
- Does the child have access to identification documents?

# Wrap-up

## Intervention/Solutions

- Have you taken other action in addressing the maltreatment, other than making this call?
- Are you aware of anything the family is doing to address the concerns?
- Has the child expressed concern about being at or going home?
- Do you have concerns about the child going home/being at home? If yes, describe.
- Have you talked about these concerns with anyone else who knows the family?
- What do you think is the cause of this problem?
- What would it take to make the child safer?
- How will you know when this problem will be solved?
- Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to add to this report?

## SCALING

- If this situation remained unchanged, how would you rate the level of safety in the home on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 being very safe with no concerns, and 10 being very dangerous?
- Tell me how you reached this number.
- What do you believe needs to happen to move it one point higher on the scale?

