Identifying and Addressing Human Trafficking in Child Welfare Agencies: Telephone Interview Guide for State Human Trafficking Coordinators

This guide should be administered to state welfare human trafficking coordinators, or comparable leadership role in the agency's response to human trafficking.

Respondent:
Title:
Organization:
Interviewer:
Date:

Introduction

Hello, this is _____from RTI International. As we discussed, we are conducting a study sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families to understand child welfare agency efforts to identify human trafficking, serve victimized children and youth, and train staff on screening for human trafficking. From your perspective as a leader, we would like to learn more about your [STATE's] policies and practices in these three areas. I have a bit of background based on what has been posted on [agency, task force, etc.] website and [STATE AGENCY's] Annual Progress and Service Report; although these sources don't always give a complete picture of practice, particularly activities on the horizon.

This interview is designed to be inclusive and to help make sure we capture your feedback on a variety of topics. If there are questions that you don't know the answer to, that's fine; just let us know and we can skip those questions or follow-up by email.

Voluntary and Private to the Extent Permitted by Law

Did you have any questions about the information in the email I sent regarding your participation in this interview? (Review below, as necessary.)
- Participation in this interview is completely voluntary.
- The information we collect from you is private to the extent permitted by law. We keep your interview answers on a secure computer and all staff involved in this research signed a Privacy Pledge.
- In the future, information from this study may be securely shared with qualified researchers to help improve supports for children and youth who have experienced trafficking.
- When we summarize what is learned from this study, we will report on innovative practices and challenges described by different states and counties (jurisdictions). If you prefer that we not identify your state and agency in relation to anything you describe, let us know and we will be sure that it is not reported. We will not use your name in any reports.
- With your permission, we will be audio recording the interview. This recording will be a backup to our written notes and only shared with the study team.
- You may choose to not answer certain questions or to not take part in the interview at any time.
- We expect this interview to take about 90 minutes.

Permission to Record

Do I have your permission to record the interview? *(Interviewer circle one.)* **YES**   **NO**
If yes, begin audio recording the interview.

Respondent Role/Background

1) First, let me confirm your current position:
    a) What are your main responsibilities, particularly with respect to human trafficking?
    b) How long have you been in this role?

2) Before your current position, did you work in other positions for the [AGENCY]?
    - *If yes, ask:*
    a) What positions?
    b) Did these roles include human trafficking efforts?
    c) How long have you been with [AGENCY] altogether?
    d) Have you had any roles that included human trafficking efforts outside of [AGENCY]?

3) As background, can you describe the scope of your agency's focus with respect to human trafficking – does it include victimization by parents/caregivers only, someone acting in a parent/caregiver role, or any third party? Does it include engagement in commercial sex when there is no third party involved?

4) Are there variations within [STATE] in **official policy** related to screening, specialized services, or training?
    - *Clarify, if needed:* Variations might exist among counties, or among entities responsible for care delivery, if [STATE] has privatized services.
    - **If yes:** Probe for descriptions of where variations occur, e.g., a given county's regulations go further than state on this requirement.

Screening Tools and Practice

Our next set of questions are about screening for human trafficking, such as situations in which screening occurs and screening tools used.

5) Thinking about when, where, and how children and youth are screened in different jurisdictions, how consistent are **screening practices** within [STATE]?
    - Probe for variations with respect to tools used and when, where, and how children are screened.

    - *If practice varies within state*: In the following questions, let's focus on most common practice, but please point out areas where local practice is most variable.

6) When are children and youth screened for human trafficking, whether as part of a routine assessment or in response to specific events? For example, are they screened...?
    - At centralized intake call center or emergency services

- During an investigation
- While in child welfare custody (initial placement or periodically while in custody?)
- Upon recovery from runaway/missing from care episode
- Other (specify)

Ask the following for each situation:

a) Are all children and youth screened [in this situation], or only certain children and youth? How do you decide which children are screened, or what guidance do you follow?

a) Who does the screening?

7) *Ask for each situation in which screening occurs:* What screening tool is used in this situation?
    - *If tool(s) were sent in advance of the interview,* ask any clarifying questions identified during review to capture information below.
    - *If tool(s) were not sent in advance of the interview*, request that respondent share, but ask for each screening tool:

    a) How would you describe this screening tool?
        - *Indicator ("red flag") tool*: a set of behavioral, physical, and situational characteristics that may be associated with trafficking victimization
        - *Interview tool:* a set of questions asked of children and youth about experiences that are consistent with trafficking victimization
        - *Tiered approach:* a relatively brief indicator tool paired with a more in-depth interview used for further assessment
        - *Tailored tools:* interview tools used in specific situations, such as when a youth returns from a runaway episode
        - What does the output of the tool look like? Are there risk categories, scores, or some other result? **(Note moving forward: As able, substitute appropriate language from tool output.)**

    b) Does this tool identify children and youth at *increased risk* of human trafficking, as well as *likely victims* of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

    c) Does this tool focus primarily on sex trafficking, or is it intended to also identify labor trafficking that does not appear to be sexual in nature?

    d) Does the tool include a written protocol that provides details on when and how screening is conducted, including measures to build rapport with children and youth and support trauma-informed practice?

Ask the following for each tool referenced in question 7):

8) Is this a tool that was developed within the state, adapted from an existing tool, or was an existing tool adopted without any changes?

    a) What were the most important influences on [STATE's] decision to [develop its own tool(s), adapt existing tool(s), and/or adopt existing tool(s)]?

    b) Who led the process, and who was involved, i.e., state child welfare agency, local agency/ies, and/or human trafficking task forces?

    c) *If developed own tool(s):* What was the process for developing [STATE's] screening tool(s)? Has it been updated over time?

    d) *If adapted existing tool(s):* What kinds of adaptations were made, and why? Has it been updated over time?

    e) *If adopted existing tool(s):* What factors led to selection of this tool? Is it used as intended by the developer?

    f) *All:* What kind of work, if any, has been done to validate or evaluate the tool(s)?

For the following question, focus on a global assessment of screening practice, but identify strengths or weaknesses associated with specific tools, if mentioned.

9) Thinking about *screening tools* used in [STATE]:
    a) From your perspective, what are the strengths of the tool(s) used?
    b) From your perspective, what, if anything, are weaknesses of the tool(s) used?
    c) From your perspective, do screening protocols provide adequate guidance for staff who use the tool? What, if anything, would you add or change to the protocol?
    d) **(If tools used vary within state)** Which tool(s) do you consider the strongest?
    e) If [STATE] were choosing or developing its screening tool today, what would be your recommendation, and why?

10) Thinking about *screening practice* in [STATE]:
    a) From your perspective, what are the strengths of the screening practices in [STATE]?
    b) From your perspective, what are the areas for improvement, or gaps, in the screening practices used in [STATE]?
    c) What, if anything, would you change if you could?
    d) Do you expect any changes to the screening practices you described, within the next year or longer term?

11) How, if at all, has screening policy or practice changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Screening Outcomes and Connections to Specialized Services

Our next questions are about screening outcomes, and connecting children and youth to specialized services after they are identified as likely victims of, or at increased risk of, human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL].

12) Does [STATE AGENCY] keep data on screenings by [STATE AGENCY] and outcomes of their screenings?
- ***If yes, ask:*** Are there reports or summaries that can be shared, e.g., by year, total screenings conducted, unique children and youth screened, outcomes?
- ***If no, say:*** Please give us your best estimates for the next few questions. We are going to ask about the last 12 months, but if you don't have estimates for that timeframe, the last calendar or fiscal year would work as well. Just let us know the timeframe you are referencing.

    a) In the last year, how many unique children and youth were screened for human trafficking?
    b) In the last year, how many screenings for human trafficking were conducted?

c)   In the last year, how many children and youth were identified through screening as *likely* victims of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

d)   ***If screening tool(s) used in [STATE] identify children and youth at increased risk of human trafficking***, **ask**: In the last year, how many children and youth were identified through screening as being at increased risk of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

13) How consistent is the response to children and youth identified as likely human trafficking victims [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL] within [STATE], thinking both about processes and specialized services in different jurisdictions?
- ***If practice varies within state***: In the following questions, let's focus on most common practice, but please point out areas where local practice is most variable.

14) What happens after children and youth are determined through screening to be *likely victims* of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL], e.g., hotline report, further assessment, staffing, child advocacy center, or law enforcement involvement?
a)   Who is responsible for follow-up after likely victims of trafficking are identified?

15) Does the [STATE] have specialized services for children and youth identified as *likely victims* of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?
- **If no, skip to question 17).**
- **If yes, ask the below:**
a)   What is [STATE's] process for connecting children and youth identified as *likely victims* of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL] to specialized services?
b)   Is a specialized case management protocol used?
  - **If reviewed in advance, ask any clarifying questions.**

  - **Otherwise, request a copy and ask:**

  i)   Can you describe what it specifies and how it varies from practice for children and youth who are not identified as likely trafficked [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

  ii) Does this protocol specify assignment to a case manager with additional training?

c)   What additional or specialized services are likely to be recommended, e.g., specialized placements, more intensive case management, medical and dental, other services?

16) Thinking of the children and youth who are identified as *likely* victims of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL] in [STATE], what are the specific services available to them?
Probe for all specialized services and ask detailed questions for those identified.
- Specialized case management
- Specialized foster homes or group and residential placements
- Clinical resources
- Mentoring and support programs
- Medical and Dental
- Other services (specify)

a)   From your perspective, does the availability of services match the need for them? What services do you need more of and/or better quality of?

b) From your perspective, do all areas within the state have access to services? If no, what areas do not have access to services, and which services?
c) From your perspective, are services appropriate for the children and youth who need them (including younger children, LGBTQ youth, males, and children and youth with intellectual disabilities)? If no, what are the gaps in appropriate services?
d) From your perspective, are services acceptable to the children and youth who need them (including younger children, LGBTQ youth, males, and children and youth with intellectual disabilities)?
e) What kinds of services are available for children and youth identified as likely victims of labor trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

17) What is [STATE's] response to children and youth considered to be *at increased risk* of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?
a) What kinds of information are used to determine that children and youth are at increased risk of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]? (screening tool and/or other information, e.g., case manager concerns, parent or provider concerns, law enforcement information)
b) What happens after children and youth are determined to be at increased risk of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]? ***Probe for the following:*** documentation, assessment, education, safety planning, or referrals to services.
c) Are specialized services available for children and youth determined to be *at increased risk* of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]? What types of services?   Educational opportunities to increase protective factors?
d) Are these children and youth re-screened or assessed after any period?

18) Do you expect any changes within the next year to the specialized services you described?

19) Thinking about the process for connecting children and youth to specialized services, and specialized services for children and youth who are *likely victims of*, or at *increased risk of*, trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL] in [STATE]:
a) From your perspective, how well does the process for connecting children and youth to services work?
b) From your perspective, what are the strengths of specialized services in [STATE]?
c) From your perspective, what are the areas for improvement, or gaps, in the specialized services in [STATE]?
d) What kinds of services do you wish that [STATE] could provide?

20) How, if at all, has availability of or access to specialized services changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Training

Finally, we have some questions about training. This includes training on conducting screenings for human trafficking, identifying children and youth who should be screened, and connecting children and youth to specialized services.

21) Thinking about training on how to conduct screenings, when screening should be done, and how to connect children and youth to specialized services, how consistent is training related to human trafficking within [STATE]?
   - *If practice varies within state*: In the following questions, let's focus on the most common practice, but please point out areas where local practice is most variable.

22) Do *staff who conduct screenings* for human trafficking receive training on the tool and on screening procedures?
   a) *If no, ask:* Are you aware of any plans to offer training on screening for human trafficking? *Skip to question 24).*
   b) Is the training on how to conduct screening mandatory for staff *who conduct screenings* (Reference specific types of personnel named in *question 6)*.)
   c) When is the training offered, e.g., pre-service only, annually?
   d) Is this a training that [STATE AGENCY] developed, was it adapted from an existing training, or did the agency adopt an existing training?
   e) Does the training offer:
      i) An introduction to human trafficking more generally? If not, is that a pre-requisite training in order for them to be trained on screening?
      ii) State-specific information, e.g., state-wide victim data, high-risk areas, common indicators, state-specific examples, etc.?

23) We would like to be able to describe training for staff who conduct screening in [STATE].
   - *If training materials were sent in advance of the interview, ask any clarifying questions identified during review.*
   - *If training materials were not sent in advance of the interview, request materials and ask:* How would you describe the training?
   a) How is the training delivered (instructor-led, online, etc.)?
   b) What guidance does the training provide as to when and how to conduct screenings?
   c) Does the training include specific instructions on how to incorporate trauma-informed practice into the screening?
   d) What guidance does the training provide about how to report screening results for children and youth who are likely trafficking victims [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]? At increased risk of trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?
   e) Does the training include content on placement and service options for children and youth who are likely trafficking victims [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?

24) In addition to training for staff who conduct screening, do existing trainings on human trafficking include information on identifying children and youth who should be screened for human trafficking?
   - *If no, skip to question 25)*.
   a) What types of personnel receive this training? *Probe, as necessary, for different types of personnel, such as:*
      - Agency directors
      - Casework supervisors
      - Investigative caseworkers
      - Caseworkers who provide ongoing case management and services
      - Public agency foster parents

- Public agency group and residential care staff
- Private agency foster parents
- Private agency group and residential care staff
- Other agency staff, e.g., juvenile justice, law enforcement, judges, parole/probation, TANF, SNAP

Ask the following for each type of personnel identified:

b) Is the training integrated into more general training on human trafficking, or is it offered as a standalone?
c) Who delivers the training?
d) What is the mode of the training, e.g., integrated into other training, required or optional, etc.?

25) Do staff receive training on connecting children and youth who are identified as likely victims of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL] to specialized services?
a) Which staff receive this training? Is it mandatory, or optional?
b) When is the training offered? (Pre-service, annually?)
c) Is it part of a more comprehensive training, or stand-alone?
d) Is this a training that [AGENCY] developed, adapted from an existing training, or did the agency adopt an existing training?
e) What is included in this training? **Probe for: selecting services/providers for children and youth who are trafficked, referral processes, delivery.**

26) Thinking about training related to human trafficking, are there any resources to support this training, beyond the typical resources (funds) used to train staff more generally?

27) Does [AGENCY] track how many staff are trained related to human trafficking? If yes, can you share data on how many staff have been trained on these topics, e.g., each year, in total, by role?
- **If yes, ask:**
a) Do these numbers include contact staff?
b) Do these numbers reflect a "Train the Trainer" approach?
- If no, ask for best estimates for the questions below. Note: We are going to ask about the last 12 months, but if you don't have estimates for that timeframe, the last calendar or fiscal year would work as well. Just let us know the timeframe you are referencing.
c) In the last year, how many staff members have been trained on how to conduct screenings?
d) In the last year, how many staff members in [AGENCY] have been trained on identifying children and youth who should be screened?
e) In the last year, how many staff members from other agencies have been trained on identifying children and youth who should be screened?
  i) What types of staff or agencies does that include, e.g., juvenile justice, law enforcement, schools?
f) In the last year, how many foster parents have been trained on identifying children and youth who should be screened?
g) In the last year, how many staff have been trained on specialized services for children and youth who are identified as being at increased risk of human trafficking, or likely victims of human trafficking [or LANGUAGE FROM TOOL]?
28) Thinking about training on human trafficking, including screening and specialized services:
a) From your perspective, what are the strengths of practice in [STATE]?

    b)   From your perspective, what are the areas for improvement, or gaps, in the training/training programs offered?

    c)   In what areas could staff benefit from additional skills/knowledge/support, e.g., dynamics of trafficking, trauma-informed assessment?

    d)   What, if anything, would you change if you could?

29) How, if at all, has training on human trafficking changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Wrap-Up

30) Is there anything I haven't asked on these topics that we should understand?

31) I look forward to reviewing the information that you offered to share with us. ***Recap materials or information* offered during the interview.**

- You can send this information/material to us at [email].

- I'd appreciate receiving it by [DATE] so we can review it with other information from other sites.

32) In the next phase of this study, we will be interviewing regional and local human trafficking coordinators and casework supervisors in a limited number of local offices or agencies. Within [STATE], are there offices or agencies that you would identify as particularly strong in terms of identifying human trafficking and connecting children and youth to specialized services? Why?

33) As part of this study, we will create a summary of what we learn from these interviews to be shared with participants and more broadly.

    a)   Thinking about the things we've discussed in this interview, are there topics where you'd be particularly interested in the experience of other child welfare agencies?

    b)   How would you like to receive this information, e.g., report, webinar, etc.?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.