



DC Court's STAR Assessment Tool Training: Helping Courts Identify Child Trafficking Victims

Presented by:
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Court Social Services Division
DC Superior Court

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Human Trafficking and Immigration in State Courts
Judicial Peer to Peer Session
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Superior Court of the District of Columbia

Honorable Anita Josey-Herring
Chief Judge

Cheryl Bailey, Ph.D.
Executive of Court

Zabrina Dempson
Clerk of the Court

District of Columbia Family Court

Honorable Peter Krauthamer
Presiding Family Court Judge

Honorable Jennifer Di Toro
Deputy Presiding Family Court Judge

Honorable Mary Grace Rook
Magistrate Judge- HOPE Court

Bios of Presenters:

- Shelia Roberson-Adams, Acting Deputy Director of Family Court Social Services Division (CSSD)- Ms. Roberson-Adams is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. She moved to the Washington DC Metropolitan area in 1986 and was employed at Family and Child Services. She has been engaged in the service of youth and families in the District of Columbia since then. Ms. Roberson-Adams began her career at Court Social Services Division (CSSD) as a probation officer. She was one of the founding members of the Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) and developed Children of Violent Environments (COVE), a group for youth impacted by domestic violence. Ms. Roberson-Adams has been a manager since 1993 and has led many initiatives as a Supervisory Probation Officer and an Assistant Deputy Director. She led CSSD in the development of the probation team for the Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) and Here Opportunities Prepare you for Excellence (HOPE). In 2019, she began supervising several CSSD support teams. In June of 2021, she assumed the role of Acting Deputy Director of the Division. Ms. Roberson-Adams enjoys summertime, movie watching and a good book.
- Katara Watkins-Laws, Ph.D., is the Acting Chief Psychologist at the Child Guidance Clinic, District of Columbia, Superior Court. She is a licensed clinical psychologist and received her doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Howard University and holds a Graduate Certificate in Working with Survivors of Trauma and Torture from University of Maryland. Dr. Watkins-Laws has presented at multiple professional conferences and has authored and co-authored several scientific articles including publications in the NSHA Dialog, The Journal of Negro Education, Psychology and Public Policy, and Law. This includes the validation article of the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR), a screening tool for youth at risk for commercial sex trafficking developed at DC Superior Court. Dr. Watkins-Laws provides trainings to child welfare agencies, juvenile justice settings, and community members on understanding and identifying risk factors associated with commercial child sex exploitation and the use of the STAR. Dr. Watkins-Laws is a native to Washington, D.C.

Court Social Services Division (CSSD)



Terri Odom
Division Director

Shelia Roberson-Adams
Acting Deputy Director

Katarina Watkins-Laws, Ph.D.
Acting Chief Psychologist

- CSSD is the juvenile probation agency for the District of Columbia
- Child Guidance Clinic (CSSD-CGC) is the mental health branch of CSSD



Today's Objective/Outline

- Section I:
 - Background of the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) at DC Courts
 - Unique factors related to screening CSEC
 - Understanding Screening vs. Assessment
- Section II
 - Development of the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) at DC Courts
 - STAR in practice
- Section III:
 - Supporting Materials of STAR
 - Process for obtaining training in STAR

Hallmark events at DC Courts related to addressing CSEC

- ✓ In 2013, Presiding Family Court Judge, Hiram Puig-Lugo developed a city-wide task force to address CSEC in the nation's capital.
- ✓ In 2015, visit from Center for Court Innovation and development of strategic plan to address CSEC and a CSEC Multidisciplinary Team was created
- ✓ In 2016, staff from the Child Guidance Clinic at the request of the Office of the Director of CSSD, completed the validation study and published the STAR, a “questionnaire” to identify youth involved or at-risk of CSEC following extensive, unsuccessful search to locate an existing valid screening tool*
- ✓ In 2017, visits conducted to CSEC courts in Philadelphia, Miami, & New York City to inform development of CSEC-specialty court in DC
- ✓ In 2018, HOPE Court launches

DC Court's Criteria for CSEC Screening Tool:

- Tool that :
 - Is brief
 - Is easy to use and interpret
 - Is able to be utilized by a variety of professionals in the juvenile justice system
 - Provides a valid estimate of risk for youth in the District of Columbia

The Complications of CSEC Screening

- Masking charges
- Don't prompt disclosure
- Can't identify victims using mental health symptoms alone
- Approximately 3,000 adolescent youth arrests in DC per year

Barriers To CSEC Identification

- Fear of being blamed or judged
- Feelings of helplessness, self-blame & self-doubt
- Lack of awareness or acknowledgement of being a victim (traumatic bonding)
- Credible fear of the perpetrator
- Movement within and across jurisdictions makes statistics difficult
- Lack of appropriate public systems for these cases

Best practices for identification for CSEC victims

- Less intrusive lines of questioning (Leitch & Snow, 2010; Salisbury et al., 2015)
- CSEC triage process that is informed by indicators of risk factors identified in literature
- Clinical interviewing done by personnel who will act as a therapist

WestCoast Children's Clinic CSEC Screening Tool Criteria

- Validated (data collection & statistical confirmation of reliability and validity)
- Length: Administration and required documentation associated with the tool
- Source of Information: Youth (person of concern), Other collateral reporter or source (e.g., prior records and documentation)
 - Self-disclosure required
- Domain/System specific: Settings tool can be used in
- Guide to Action: Aides in determination of victimization and next steps
- Format/Mode: Checklist vs. Interview questionnaire – structured semi-structured or unstructured vs. Case review

Available CSEC Assessment Options



Matrix of Screening Tools to Identify Commercially Sexually Exploited Children



	Organization	Tool Name	Validated	Length	Source of Information	Domain/ System Specific	Guide to Action; Potential Use for Prevention	Format / Mode	Open- or Closed- Ended	Intended Populations	Appropriate for Minors	Sexual Exploitation/ Trafficking	Labor Trafficking
1	WestCoast Children's Clinic	Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool	In process	10 key indicators plus 48 guiding questions	Any	Any	Yes	Checklist of indicators	Closed	Minors and young adults	Yes	Yes	No
2	Shared Hope International	Intervene	No	42 questions at intake plus 55 questions to explore or confirm possible trafficking	Self-disclosure by victim	Any	No	Structured interview	Open	Minors	Yes	Yes	No
3	Vera Institute of Justice	Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)	Yes	75 questions (long form) or 55 questions (short form), some questions are only asked as followup if client answers "yes" to a previous item.	Self-disclosure by victim	Any	No	Structured interview	Mixed	Adult and Minors	Only with significant modifications to questions and to language	Yes	Yes
4	Loyola University Chicago Center for the Human Rights for Children & Intl Org for Adolescents (IOFA)	Rapid Screening Tool (RST) for Child Trafficking	No	12 questions	Self-disclosure by victim	Any	No	Structured interview	Open	Minors	Yes	Yes	Yes

Available CSEC Assessment Options



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10 indicators-
45 guiding questions

42 questions +
55 follow-up questions*

75 questions (long-form),
55 (short-form)*

Available CSEC Assessment Options

- qualitative, semi-structured interviews intended to inform clinical judgments
 - Shared Hope International's INTERVENE (Leitch & Snow, 2010)
 - InterCSEct (Salisbury et al., 2015)
- quantitative, checklist of risk indicators
 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT) Version 2.0 (WestCost Children's Clinic, 2015)
 - Brief
 - Validated
 - Does not require disclosure
 - Score guide- "Continuum of Concern"

STAR Tool via the WestCoast Children's Clinic CSEC Screening Tool Criteria

Criteria	STAR Responses
VALIDATED	YES
LENGTH	5-10 mins
SOURCE OF INFORMATION	9 Items (Respondent) 3 Items (Records) *Self-disclosure not required
DOMAIN/SYSTEM SPECIFIC	Juvenile Probation & Child Welfare
GUIDE TO ACTION	YES (Agency Specific)
FORMAT/MODE	Empirically-guided checklist

Clinical Rationales for Avoiding Disclosure

- Multiple disclosures may re-traumatize youth
- In-depth clinical interview may generate disclosure, but not feasible in forensic setting
- Youth may lack knowledge of their own CSEC victimization

CSEC Screening vs. Assessment

CSEC Screening

- Quick and effective indicator to potential victim
- Prompts follow-up action including:
 - Report to child welfare and/or law enforcement
 - Safety planning
 - Referral to services
 - Continued monitoring
- Results available immediately
- Disclosure or confirmation not required (or appropriate)
- May involve only one tool

• CSEC Assessment

- Goal is to gain more in-depth information to address CSEC concern
- More comprehensive
- Assessment should be CSEC- and trauma-informed
- May include disclosure
- Other assessment tools and collateral information may be utilized to inform recommendations

Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR)

- Brief
- Objective
- Non-intrusive
- Identifies youth most vulnerable to CSEC
- Risk-based scoring system (low, moderate, high)
- Rooted in empiricism

Development of the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR)

Development of the STAR: *Validation Sample*

- 901 youth arrested in Washington, DC
- Average age = 15.44 ($SD = 1.50$)
- males ($n = 494, 54.83\%$); females ($n = 407, 45.17\%$)
- 859 African-Americans (95.34%)

Development of the STAR: *CSEC Pilot Results (Triage)*

- **High Risk** ($n = 68, 7.55\%$)
- Moderate Risk ($n = 91, 10.10\%$)
- Low Risk ($n = 742, 82.35\%$)

Development of the STAR: *Convergent Validity*

- Conners Comprehensive Behavioral Rating Scales
 - Major Depression Index
 - Overall Clinical Index Score
- Children Attribution and Perception Scale (CAPS)
 - Feeling Different
 - Personal Attribution
 - Perceived Creditability
 - Interpersonal Trust

Development of the STAR: *Inter-Rater Reliability*

- Mock and actual cases
- Months 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, and one year
- Always .80 (correlation)
- Amendments to Codebook were ongoing

Towards the Discreet Identification of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Victims and Individualized Interventions: Science to Practice

James R. Andretta, Malcolm H. Woodland, Katara M. Watkins, and Michael E. Barnes
Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC

The purpose of the present study was to build on the extant Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) screening options available for use in the juvenile justice system, where screenings must be brief, objective, and nonintrusive. Our goal was not to develop a system to identify CSEC victims, but instead to objectively discern CSEC risk in youth to be further examined through a referral process. Risk factors or indicators of risk for CSEC victimization have been proposed, and used to develop semistructured interviews intended to inform clinical judgments. We propose an objective, quantitative decision-making system for determining CSEC risk called the Sex-Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR[®] 2015 District of Columbia Courts). Participants included 901 youth (95.34% African American; 45.17% female; *Mean age* = 15.44, *SD* = 1.50) arrested in Washington, DC. A codebook was developed to aid scoring of STAR items, and kappa interrater reliability coefficients were developed to assure adequate agreement in STAR scores among screeners. An Item Response Theory (IRT) model was applied to STAR scores, and 3 CSEC risk statuses were identified: (a) High Risk, (b) Moderate Risk, and (c) Low Risk. Consistent with the CSEC literature, STAR statuses were associated with depression and other clinical symptoms as well as perceptions and attributions known to be common in sexual abuse victims. Also in keeping with theory, STAR statuses were associated with gender, but not age. Results are discussed in the context of service provision in a juvenile court system, including the implementation of the STAR.

Keywords: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, delinquency, family court, juvenile justice, Sex-Trafficking Assessment Review

Current Uses of the STAR

- DC Courts Family Court
- DC Child and Family Service Agency
- DC Department of Health Services
- Illinois' 17th Circuit Court
 - Juvenile Probation Assessment Center
 - Department of Child and Family Services

Use of STAR at DC Courts

Screening Protocol Instruments

Conners-CI Self Report Items

Last, First: _____ Gender: _____ Male/ Female
 DOB: _____ School: _____
 Age: _____ Grade: _____
 Ethnicity: _____ Test Date: _____

Instructions: Here are some things that children and teenagers might say. Tell us, in *your* opinion, how true you think these things are about you. Think about yourself in the *past month*. Read each item carefully, then mark how true it is, or how often it happened to you in the *past month*.

- 0 = In the past month, this was *not true at all* about me. It never (or seldom) happened.
- 1 = In the past month, this was *just a little true* about me. It happened occasionally.
- 2 = In the past month, this was *pretty much true* about me. It happened often (quite a bit).
- 3 = In the past month, this was *very much true* about me. It happened very often (frequently).

Please circle only one answer for each item. It is important to respond to every item. For items that you find difficult to answer, please give your best guess.

Rating	0 = Not true at all (Never, Seldom)
In the past month, this was...	1 = Just a little true (Occasionally)
	2 = Pretty much true (Often, Quite a bit)
	3 = Very much true (Very Often, Frequently)

1. (6)	I bully or threaten other people.	0	1	2	3
2. (16)	The future seems hopeless to me.	0	1	2	3
3. (17)	I interrupt other people.	0	1	2	3
4. (18)	I am behind in my schoolwork.	0	1	2	3
5. (29)	I feel like I am driven by a motor.	0	1	2	3
6. (32)	I have trouble keeping myself organized.	0	1	2	3
7. (36)	I know where to get a gun or another serious weapon when I need one.	0	1	2	3
8. (57)	It is hard for me to think of ideas for stories or papers.	0	1	2	3
9. (72)	I feel like things are not going well in my life, and I can't do anything about it.	0	1	2	3
10. (75)	I do dangerous things.	0	1	2	3
11. (97)	I feel like nobody cares about me.	0	1	2	3
12. (102)	Reading is hard for me.	0	1	2	3
13. (113)	I have trouble keeping my mind on things.				
14. (114)	I run or climb even when I am not supposed to.				
15. (128)	I have trouble stopping myself from worrying.				
16. (129)	I have trouble following instructions.				
17. (137)	I feel tired, like I don't have enough energy.				
18. (144)	I do things to hurt people.				
19. (146)	I think about hurting myself.				
20. (150)	When I'm worried, I suddenly have trouble breathing, or my heart pounds really fast.				
21. (157)	People make me so mad that I lose control.				
22. (164)	I have a lot of fears.				
23. (167)	I am discouraged.				
24. (169)	I am a slow reader.				

Conners –Clinical Index and Critical Items

Critical Items

1. (55)	An awful thing happened to me where I thought I was going to die or get badly hurt.	0	1	2	3
2. (68)	I take drugs that I'm not supposed to.	0	1	2	3
3. (79)	I've made plans to hurt others.	0	1	2	3
4. (139)	Something awful happened and I thought someone was going to get hurt or die	0	1	2	3
5. (168)	I drink beer, wine, or other things I'm not supposed to drink.	0	1	2	3

¹ Two items (CBRS items 137, 146) are excluded from the MDES as they are already on the CI (items 17, 19).

Please ask youth the following questions, and endorse the level of risk associated with each answer using the Likert Scale below.

STAR
9 items administered
to youth

3 items answered by
interviewer

No Risk **Moderate Risk** **High Risk**
0 1 2

___ 1. Where were you staying overnight prior to detention?

1 at a friend's house

2 at a boyfriend/girlfriend's house

___ 2. Are you living with anyone? If so, who are you living with and what is your relationship with them?

1 at a friend's house

2 at a boyfriend/girlfriend's house

___ 3. Have you ever been placed in foster care or a group home?

1 one placement

2 multiple placements

- _____ 6. Are you dating anyone? If so, how old are they?
 1 older than youth 2 over 18
- _____ 7. What are some things you bought for yourself over the past two months? Who paid for it?
 1 self and item \geq \$100 2 friend and item \geq \$100
- _____ 8. What names have you used other than your own?
 1 any alias 2 alias with connotation (e.g. Treasure or Candy)
- _____ 9. Do you have any tattoos? If so, do they have special meaning?
 1 any tattoo 2 tattoo denoting allegiance to a person/group

Screener to Answer on Own:

- _____ 10. Evidence of abuse (e.g. ligature marks, burns, bruises)?
 1 visible bruises 2 bruises hidden under clothing
- _____ 11. Any "red-flag" charges in CourtView (e.g. status offenses, loitering, runaways, curfew violations)?
 1 more than 1 charge 2 more than 5 charges
- _____ 12. Charge of solicitation/prostitution
 2 any charge of solicitation/prostitution

STAR Codebook

<p><u>Item 1</u></p>	<p>Where were you staying overnight prior to detention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the youth does not reveal the nature of the relationship with whom they stayed with the night before or the rater is uncertain about the relationship between the youth and person providing housing, the rater should assign a “2”, like in the following examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Staying with a boyfriend or girlfriend▪ Pimp▪ On the street▪ <i>Someone</i> but not a friend or family member▪ “somewhere where I feel safe”• If the youth reports staying overnight with an individual characterized as a member or friend of the family (i.e., “my uncle’s house, “my god-father,” “my cousin”), the rater should attempt to determine if the youth had permission to be with the individual. If the parent/guardian was not aware of the youth’s whereabouts, then the rater should at minimum assign a “1”.
<p><u>Item 2</u></p>	<p>Are you living with anyone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The youth may initially say they live with their mom, however, you learn the youth stays, or spends as much or more time away from home, with a boyfriend (rating=2) or friend (rating =1) then assign a rating of “2” or “1”, which trumps the 0. <p>If so, who are you living with and what is your relationship to them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the youth does not reveal the nature of the relationship with whom they are

DC Superior Court- CSSD CSEC Identification Protocol

- STAR Screenings Conducted
 - At arrest
 - Initial Hearings for PINS Cases
 - Referred youth
 - Court-Ordered
- Log Results
- Disseminate Results:
 - Judge
 - Probation Officer
 - Multidisciplinary Team (for purpose of additional case review and possible HOPE Court referrals)
 - Assigned Assistant Attorney General and Defense Counsel



CSEC Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT)

- Monthly Meetings
- Conducts case reviews
- Develops individualized, multidisciplinary intervention plans
- Participants include:
 - Child and Family Service Agency/Child Protection Services
 - Children's National Medical Center
 - Court Social Services Division
 - Probation
 - Child Guidance Clinic
 - DC Children's Advocacy Center
 - Department of Behavioral Health
 - Metropolitan Police Department
 - Office of the Attorney General

STAR Training & Use

Steps to obtaining training & use of the STAR tool

- Complete 1- to 2- Day Training (manager & line staff recommended)
 - Training topics include:
 - CSEC Risk Factors In-depth Review
 - Overview of validation process
 - Training on STAR items and use of codebook
 - Guided practice on tool
- Develop process and point of contact for STAR data collection to be sent to CSSD
- Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), prior to obtaining and use of tool

CSSD Follow-up Contact Information

- Send email of interest to Terri.odom@dcsc.gov
- Subject line: Interest in STAR Tool
- CC: shelia-roberson-adams@dcsc.gov; katara.watkins-laws@dcsc.gov
- Include the court you are associated with and any other points of contact for future coorespondence