

## Introduction to the DC Court's **Sex-trafficking Assessment Review (STAR)**



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### **A Discreet Identification of *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Victims***

- a brief (12-item), objective, and nonintrusive CSEC screening alternative
- quantitative decision-making system for determining a youth's amount of CSEC risk
- STAR includes a codebook, and initial data show high levels of scoring agreement among screeners with a moderate level of training (i.e., inter-rater reliability)

## **STAR Introduction**

The Sex-trafficking Assessment Review (STAR; Andretta, Watkins, Barnes, & Woodland, in press) is a brief (12-item), objective, nonintrusive, quantitative decision making system for determining a youth's amount of CSEC risk. The STAR is intended to be a screener employed by large agencies where thorough clinical interviewing of all youth with agency contact is not administratively feasible. Said another way, the STAR is best conceptualized as a triage tool. Therefore, the STAR should not be used to confirm a CSEC suspicion, but rather to assess whether or not a youth should be provided with a thorough CSEC assessment. It should also be noted that the STAR includes a codebook, which providers should be familiar with before administering to youth.

We suggest that a cut score of 7 be used to identify youth with at least a moderate risk for CSEC victimization, and a cut score of 10 to identify youth with a high risk for CSEC victimization. Items 11 and 12 require access to court records. If court records are not available, the cutoff for moderate risk is 7, and the cutoff for high risk is 9.

It is also suggested that the STAR be administered along with an assessment of mental health symptoms. For instance, at DC Courts, we administer the STAR along with the Connors Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales – Clinical Index – Self-Report (CBRS-SR; Connors, 2008). Additionally, the STAR administration packet includes a scale intended to assess perceptions and attributions commonly observed in individuals who have suffered child sexual abuse: The Children's Attributions and Perceptions Scale (CAPS; Mannarino et al., 1994). The CAPS and the CBRS-SR are included because the STAR is still in a developmental phase, and it is helpful to know how STAR scores are associated with scores on scales intended to assess constructs that should be theoretically related. It would be beneficial to the development of the STAR to provide DC Courts with all de-identified data collected, and ideally confirmation as to whether or not youth were confirmed CSEC victims.

With regard to pre-requisite training, practitioners should be provided with a training focused on administering STAR and using the associated codebook. It is also highly suggested that agencies to use the STAR examine inter-rater reliability to ensure practitioners are scoring youth responses in the same manner.

## **References**

Andretta, J.R., Watkins, K.M., Barnes, M.E., & Woodland, M.H. (in press). Towards the discreet identification of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) victims and individualized interventions: Science to practice. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*.

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