

Developing the York-Simcoe Sex Trafficking Sceener (YST)

Step 1

Determining Important Screening Items

Researchers created a list of potential ST warning signs based on existing research.



Supervisors, Anti-Human Trafficking Leads, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committees from Ontario child welfare agencies provided feedback on the items.



Feedback from child welfare workers, trauma therapists, homeless shelter staff, and survivors was gathered through interviews to help refine the screener.



52-item screener with response options: No, No Information, Maybe, or Yes.



Child welfare workers from two agencies completed the YST for over 600 youth they worked with at two different time points



Researchers analyzed the data to see which of the 52 items best identified ST risk



We found 32 items that were strongly linked to ST

These items are grouped into two categories:

Exploitation Warning Signs

Recruitment Warning Signs

We then compared youth scores to others served by CAS to create four risk levels:

Very Elevated Risk
Elevated Risk
Slightly Elevated Risk
Lower Risk

Step 3**How do we know the YST measures ST**

Researchers checked to see if the YST accurately identified youth confirmed or suspected to be involved in ST



The YST predicted a high number of Exploitation Warning Signs among youth confirmed or suspected of ST involvement



Researchers checked if the YST accurately identified youth who were more likely to be at ST risk according to past research



In line with other research female youth, Indigenous youth, teens ages 15-17 and 18+, those in non-foster placements, and those experiencing negative life changes had higher scores on the YST


Step 4**How do we know the YST reliably measures ST**

Researchers analyzed the data in three different ways to check reliability



Interrater: Two different workers complete the YST for the same youth

On average workers agreed on items 81% of the time



Test-retest: The same worker completed the YST for the same youth in time 1 and time 2

On average workers gave the same ratings 76% of the time



Internal Reliability: How well all the items reliably measure ST risk

Questions in the screener were highly consistent with one another, they measured ST risk 92% of the time



The YST helps child welfare workers identify youth at risk of ST, supporting prevention and timely intervention