

FAQ

CE Homeless Assessment

General Questions

What's the difference between the CE Homeless Assessment and the Barriers Assessment?

- Homeless Assessment – collected from the WI BOS pre-screen form.
- Barriers Assessment – this is what you ask the clients. It's to identify their barriers and the severity of their vulnerability.

Pre-screen

What if the client doesn't understand how to fill out the pre-screen or answer questions?

- The pre-screen is not intended to be given to the clients; it is intended to be worked through WITH the client. The pre-screen is for the case worker to read to the client and collect the appropriate information based on the client's answer to the questions. The case worker can help the client understand what the questions mean and clarify any confusion, if necessary.

What if the Head of Household does not receive income? Can they be the Head of Household?

- This is client choice. The head of household does not need to have an income as financial status does not determine who the head of household is. It is who the contact person would be for that household, and the clients get to choose who they want that to be.

Who is the Head of Household?

- The clients decide. Typically, it's who the contact person would be within their household.

Homeless Assessment

How do I calculate the percentages?

- The homeless assessment is done at the back end within our HMIS and Non-HMIS systems, so the case worker is not expected to do the math or know the percentages. When a client answers a question, and it is entered into HMIS or Non-HMIS, the system calculates the score for you.

Does each person in the household get the Homeless Assessment?

- The answers to the homeless assessment is collected on the pre-screen. The points would be given to the Head of Household.

Barriers Assessment

What if someone is a mandated reporter?

- It's important that we explain to the client before giving the assessment that we are only asking yes or no questions, and they do not need to share additional information. Answering the questions yes or no does not give any information that would be reportable.
- If a client decides to share more information (i.e., their child is being sexually assaulted, etc.), then your agency's policy regarding reporting expectations would go into effect. If it's a mandated reporter giving the assessment, the same would apply.

If there is more than one person in the household, who gets the Barriers Assessment?

- It's given as an entire household. The questions are worded as "have you or anyone in your household..." meaning, it doesn't have to apply only to the head of household.

Do youth (ages 18-24) get their own barrier assessment even if they are part of a household?

- No. The Barriers Assessment is given to the entire household.

If a youth (ages 18-24) is the only person in their household, is there a separate barriers assessment for youth?

- No. There is only one assessment for all household living situations.

Domestic Violence (DV)

Asking questions about someone's trauma is not easy. Bearing witness to the pain of others helps them to acknowledge the reality of the pain and allows us the space to submerge into the pain. It is the only way to survive the inevitable suffering of life events. As service providers we must design our phrasing of the questions to cause less harm. The intention is never to revictimize or traumatize the survivor. However, as service providers we must be able to speak about the trauma the people we serve are experiencing. If we are uncomfortable asking the questions, how do we expect survivors to speak their truth.

Sadness, anger, frustration, and other emotions are normal responses when we bear witness to the trauma of others. However, sometimes such feelings continue beyond a few days and could, along with other signs, be symptoms of vicarious trauma. Our work is incredibly challenging; we bear witness to trauma, violence, and trauma can cause vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout. Vicarious trauma is the result of indirect trauma. Seeing bad images. Hearing graphic stories. Being exposed to challenging experiences. Even though you aren't a direct witness to the trauma, it can affect you.

What qualifies as DV?

Beyond Physical Violence:

One of the many misconceptions regarding domestic violence, is it is only physical. We know domestic violence or gender-based violence is much more complex than physical violence. Physical violence is incredibly traumatic and increases the survivor's chances of being a victim of homicide. We do not want to minimize the complex tactics abusers use to gain power and control within their dynamic.

This is NOT an exhaustive list of the tactics potentially used by people who abuse. The examples below are not isolated to the assigned category. A survivor's experience is unique and may not fit in a box. Using active listening skills will assist you to take-in what the survivor is experiencing.

Economic/financial abuse - preventing someone from having access to credit cards, bank accounts and money. Preventing someone from working by limiting/withholding transportation, calling their work, and harassing them. Other examples include taking their money, continuously calling and texting while someone is at work, preventing someone from being effective at their job, monitoring cash-apps, calling someone names, threatening to harm them, their children or animals.

Emotional/mental abuse – threats of suicide or self-harm, blaming their partner for their behavior, gaslighting and evading accountability, or ownership of actions, threats of outing someone to their family/friends/community, threats of calling ICE.

Isolation - preventing someone from contacting or spending time with friends, or family, preventing someone from doing outside activities or controlling transportation, and monitors phones, emails, social media.

Using children as an abuse mechanism - isolating children from safe guardian, using Family Law against the parent, withholding child support, abusing the children, using the children against the other parent, talking negatively about the other parent to the children, preventing parents from seeing the children.

What is fleeing?

Any individual who has no other residence, lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing. Fleeing is allowing yourself the space and time to plan, process, imagine, dream, hope of leaving an abusive situation.

Taking the initial action to call your agency and complete Coordinated Entry is them processing, planning, imaging themselves free of the abuse.

Fleeing is NOT linear. Survivors may want to leave after an uptick in violence, an act or eruption of violence, at their limit. Engaging the individual with active listening skills will provide opportunity for you to process through a safety plan as leaving/fleeing is the most turbulent time for a survivor to leave.

Safety Planning:

As mentioned above, fleeing an abusive relationship is one of the most turbulent times for a survivor. Creating a personalized safety plan for the survivor can be as simple as discussing calling the shelter, too organizing an escape plan including multiple agencies and people. Safety plans should include all safe members of the family. Please remember that the survivor understands their situation better than

anyone. Please use active listening skills to understand their safety concerns. NOT ALL safety plans will include law enforcement or other mainstream systems due to historical and systemic oppression, access, or trust for those systems.

What is VAWA?

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. Since its enactment in 1994, VAWA programs, administered by the U.S. Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS), have dramatically improved federal, tribal, state, and local responses to these crimes.

The pre-screen says, “What is the approximate date that you began to make plans to look for housing to leave your current abusive situation” What does that mean? What if they haven’t looked for housing but are fleeing?

- Fleeing is self-report and is based on any action the person has taken. This could be making a phone call, staying in their car temporarily, going to shelter – any action. They do not have to have left their residence in order to be fleeing. They can be housed AND fleeing DV.

If a client requests a referral to a DV agency or another DV resource, how do I provide them with a referral?

- You should ensure that you have connections with DV agencies/resources within your coalition, so when a client asks for a resource, you know what resources are available.
- If the client would like a referral to DV resources or for support, it’s important that we do a warm hand-off. A warm hand-off means calling that DV agency/resource WITH the client, introducing the client to that DV agency and ensuring they have each other’s contact information.

If the client is currently housed, but state they are fleeing DV, are they actively fleeing?

- Yes. Fleeing is also self-report. If the client says they are fleeing DV, they are fleeing.

Can I share contact information for a DV survivor with an advocacy agency that provides free and confidential services?

- Only with the client’s consent.