Vulnerability Screening Tool
Identifying and addressing vulnerability: A tool for asylum and migration systems
Purpose

Intended to guide & inform frontline workers & decision makers on the relevance of vulnerability factors to detention, community placement decisions, referrals & support
Structure

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Section A: Introduction

Section B: Vulnerability Screening Tool

Section C: Individual Case Factors & Referral to Placement and Support Options
Vulnerability & resilience

Vulnerability
- Exposure to risks of harm
- Situational
- Not fixed - dynamic
- Human rights framework guide identification & response

Resilience
- Coping capacity
- Resourcefulness
- Cultural & social resources
Vulnerability

Vulnerability is situational, we avoid the notion of ‘inherent vulnerability’ that is often covert, patronising and disempowering. The person is not the problem.
Screening helps to determine whether a more comprehensive and professional assessment is called for.
Preliminary screening

At point of first contact:
- Explain purpose & process of interview

Basic questions to identify:
- who may have formal protection needs (asylum seekers)
- who may require immediate assistance
# Vulnerability domains

| Child | Unaccompanied or separated child  
| Child accompanied by parent/s, other family members or guardians |
| Sex, Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation | Pregnant woman or girl, or nursing mother  
| Sole or primary carer/s (of dependant child, elderly person or person with a disability)  
| Woman at risk of sexual or gender-based violence, or adult or child experiencing family violence, exploitation or abuse  
| Person at risk of violence due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBTI: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex persons) |
| Health and Welfare Concerns | Physical and mental health  
| Risk of suicide  
| Disability  
| Elderly person  
| Substance addiction  
| Destitution |
| Protection Needs | Refugee and asylum-seeker  
| Survivor of torture and trauma  
| Survivor of sexual or gender-based violence or other violent crime  
| Victim of trafficking in persons  
| Stateless person |
| Other | The interviewer has an opportunity to identify vulnerability factors not captured by the previous domains |
Implementing the VST

1. Consider prompts
2. Consider questions

It is important to avoid assumptions and to adopt inclusive language. Use non-gender specific terms; for example, ask: “Are you in a relationship?” rather than “Are you married?” and “What is your partner’s name?” rather than “What is your wife’s name?” In some situations it might be useful to enquire: “People identified as belonging to a sexual minority or as LGBTI may be at risk of danger... does this affect you or a member of your family?” A supportive response if and when someone does disclose is important; then explore: “What would keep you safe, and what support do you need?”
Implementing the VST

3. Note existing service providers
4. Describe risk of harm
5. Summarise vulnerability

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<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
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<td>Refer to Section B: 8</td>
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Implementing the VST

6. Rate intervention level

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No significant vulnerability factor is currently identified. The individual’s risk of harm appears low and manageable by current resilience factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Significant vulnerability could develop without preventative support measures. Frequent monitoring of vulnerability status is recommended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Significant vulnerability is evident. Follow-up assessment and development of a Care Plan is recommended. Reference should be made to the interviewer’s description of identified risk of harm and immediate need for support.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. Consider placement options:

- alternatives to detention
- open reception
- community based placement & support
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8. Consider support options
   • Health
   • Case management
   • Basic needs
   • Legal advice
   • Others

9. Consider strengths & strategies for building resilience

4.2 Recommendation for ways to encourage resilience:
Implementing the VST

10. Make and record referrals and decisions
Country examples

Zambia
- National Referral Mechanism
- Screening & assessment to identify & protect vulnerable migrants
- Developed from & promotes government & interagency collaboration

United States of America
- Risk Classification Assessment Tool
- Guides detention, initial placement & support decisions
- Automated
Benefits for Government

With early and repeat screening and intervention:

• Improved management of resources
  • Mitigate unnecessary costs
  • Prevent, reduce and better manage risks such as harm related to detention

• Individuals better able to comply with asylum & migration system requirements
  • Prioritise & achieve faster case resolution: settlement & voluntary return
Core competencies

Values & Attitudes

Knowledge

Skills
Standards and safeguards

- Facilities
- Interpreter
- Gender-related considerations
- Legal representation & support persons
- Information provision
- Core competencies for interviewers
- Referral & reassessment
- Identify resilience, strengths, family, community
- Data protection
Thank you

For more information:

www.idcoalition.org
www.unhcr.org/detention