Minnesota Housing: Coordinated Entry
Proposed Criteria and Alternative Tools for Evaluation: Updated
Prepared by Focus Strategies

November 18, 2019

Members of the Coordinated Entry Prioritization Assistance Tool (CEPAT) work group, which includes the Continuums of Care, Tribal Collaborative, State Staff, and Priority List Managers, have reached consensus that the current version of the VI-SPDAT is not: trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, or as accurate as they desire a prioritization tool to be.

Therefore, Focus Strategies recently proposed a two-phase workplan to: identify what steps can be taken to make the current version of the VI-SPDAT more trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and accurate; identify alternative assessment tools in use in other communities that are trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and accurate; and provide recommendations on next steps with VI-SPDAT modifications or alternative tools that are in alignment with the stated objective of ensuring that the prioritization tool is more trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and accurate than what is currently in place. The first phase relies on qualitative stakeholder input, quantitative analysis, and community- and literature-based research, while the second phase includes Focus Strategies providing technical assistance for implementation of the recommendation adopted by stakeholders in Phase 1.

As part of Phase 1, this document represents the initial steps of community- and literature-based research undertaken *to identify alternative tools* that are in alignment with the objective of ensuring that the prioritization tool is more trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and accurate. We include proposed criteria, working definitions and an initial set of tools to more fully investigate.

Criteria

1) Trauma-informed
2) Culturally appropriate
3) Accurate

Working Definitions[1]

Trauma-informed – The core principles of trauma-informed care are: transparency (e.g., includes clear dialogue about resources that may or may not be available), collaboration (e.g., integrates strengths-based, problem-solving approaches), choice (e.g., participants may elect not to answer questions and have opportunity to explore potential resource connections together), and a lens for cultural and gender issues (e.g., co-development with

---

[1] It is important to note that there are critical components of both being trauma-informed and culturally appropriate that are process oriented. We have primarily limited our definitions to focus on the assessment tool and acknowledge that complete definitions are more comprehensive than those presented here.

community of culturally appropriate language). We avoid asking questions for the sole purpose of scoring and focus on barriers to housing and information needed for clear purposes. In a trauma-informed process, all clients feel safe, they are informed of how information will be used, and are given the option to refuse to answer questions or not disclose personal information.[2]

Culturally appropriate – Interventions that Respect and honor participant's culture and identification, recognize historical, community, and intergenerational trauma and its impacts, and include continuous assessment of gender and culturally responsive service delivery. Tools that fit these criteria include questions that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for all persons to reduce culture/language barriers to housing and services for special populations.[3] In practice this means the tool should include prompts to identify language barriers and cultural appropriateness that could affect a person's assessment.

Accurate – Tool has been evaluated on how well questions capture the needed information and shown to be valid.

Questions for CEPAT

1) Does the tool need to produce a score?
   CEPAT discussion: Already using multiple sources/pieces of information, need to talk with local leadership and stakeholders

2) Does the same tool (or suite of tools) needs to be adaptable to all populations – single-adults, families, and TAY?
   CEPAT discussion: Some comments included it would be useful to have some flexibility

---

[2] https://safehousingpartnerships.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/FAQ-Coordinated%20Entry-DV-SA-6-2017.pdf
[3] https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-17-01-Establishing-Additional-Requirements-or-a-Continuum-of-Care-Centralized-or-Coordinated-Assessment-System.pdf

Initial List of Alternative Tools

Please note we have conducted an initial review of existing tools; all table entries are subject to revision pending further investigation. We are happy to learn about additional CE assessment tools CEPAT members are aware of and would like us to investigate.

Tool	What is Being Assessed?	Trauma Informed?	Culturally Appropriate?	Validated?	Produces Score	Adapt to All Populations?	Potential Fit	Notes
Alliance Coordinated Assessment Tool	Column to be added after research completed	Includes pre-screening question for people fleeing DV/SA, and questions in assessment for domestic violence services	One Question about what language client is able to express herself, but nothing else	No studies found	Yes	Includes questions for youth, but can be used single adults and families	Medium/Low	No indication any CoC is currently using this tool (prior reference that was being used in Charlotte, NC; they are now using VI-SPDAT
Coordinated Access System – Houston	Column to be added after research completed	Question on experiencing DV for family; questions on experiencing sexual abuse and being kicked out because of coming out at LGBT for TAY		None found	Yes	Yes, modules developed for single adults, families, and youth	Medium/Low	Specific to needs of the community
Coordinated Entry Vulnerability Assessment – Balance of State MA	Column to be added after research completed	One question re: if domestic violence is cause of homelessness	Only reference to language/other barriers is as one of the causes of lack of employment	None found	Yes	Appears targeted to single adults	Low	

Tool	What is Being Assessed?	Trauma Informed?	Culturally Appropriate?	Validated?	Produces Score	Adapt to All Populations?	Potential Fit	Notes
DESC – Vulnerability Assessment Tool	Column to be added after research completed	Includes survival skills (evidence of vulnerability) as a component of the assessment	Ability to communicate (including physical barriers or limited English) is evaluated	Yes	Yes	Designed for adults	Low	Originally used in Seattle; Seattle has since moved to VI-SPDAT. Not clear if any CoCs are using this tool. Depends on skill of evaluator to administer
Fenn-Jorstad Self Sufficiency Matrix	Column to be added after research completed			None found. Prior research has examined the self-sufficiency matrix this tool is built on	Yes, but measuring level of self-sufficiency	Broad audience – participants of human services programs (not targeted at homeless population)	Low	Used in Snohomish County, WA
Focus Strategies – Developed to local specifications Community specific examples to be added with community permission	Barriers to housing and prioritization based on local objectives	Yes, asks least invasive questions possible, part of conversation about resources and needs, integrated with problem-solving efforts.	Yes and can be adapted to meet local need.	Yes, in local communities	Yes	Yes	Medium/High	Developed in close and iterative collaboration with community leadership, providers, and consumers Wording and

Tool	What is Being Assessed?	Trauma Informed?	Culturally Appropriate?	Validated?	Produces Score	Adapt to All Populations?	Potential Fit	Notes
								order of questions developed in partnership with community; tested and revised iteratively.
Homelessness Asset and Risk Screening Tool (HART)	Column to be added after research completed			Yes	Does not appear to produce overall score	Extra questions for four groups (youth, women, older adults, peoples of Aboriginal origins)	Low	Developed for Calgary. Appears that Calgary now uses VI-SPDAT. Not clear if any CoCs are using this tool
Massachusetts Triage Tool	Column to be added after research completed			Association between triage score and future service utilization has been evaluated.	Yes	Targeted to chronic or long-term homeless adults	Low	Uses self-reported data.
Silicon Valley Triage Tool	Column to be added after research completed			Predictive power has been evaluated (how well does tool identify high-cost	Yes (probability of score 0-1 that person will persist as high-cost	Small target population –PSH for small number of individuals who incur the largest public costs.	Low	Tool requires integration of data from several administrative sources. In use in Santa Clara

Tool	What is Being Assessed?	Trauma Informed?	Culturally Appropriate?	Validated?	Produces Score	Adapt to All Populations?	Potential Fit	Notes
				users of services).	user of services			
VCEH-Coordinate Entry Housing Assessment	Column to be added after research completed	Includes pre-screening questions for people fleeing DV/SA. Include section *on DV history*	Includes pre-screen question on accommodation for disability (such as help with paperwork). Also includes optional section on housing preferences and barriers	None found	Yes, but not clear how scores are used		Medium/Low	Used in Vermont.
VI-SPDAT (Current)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
VI-SPDAT (Revised)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD