

Safety & Wellness Benchmarks

Measuring case management
outcomes for forcibly displaced
populations in the US.



This manual and the benchmarks were developed by the International Rescue Committee's Safety and Wellness Case Management Working Group. Their ideas, feedback, comments, and creative suggestions were integral in making this an important resource in the effort towards comprehensive, measurable case management services for forcibly displaced populations. Thank you to all the members of the working group for their valuable role in developing these materials.

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Introduction to the Safety & Wellness Benchmarks

The Safety & Wellness Benchmarks are a compilation of 15 individual scales that measure observable change during the provision of case management for forcibly displaced populations in the United States.

1.1 Key Concepts and Definitions

“**Forcibly displaced populations**” refers to any individual or group of individuals who have been forced to flee their home countries for a variety of reasons related to safety and well-being. This can include individuals with the following immigration statuses: refugee, asylee, asylum-seeker, special immigrant visa (SIV) holder, those with temporary protected status (TPS), and U-visa, T-visa, VAWA-visa, holders, among others. It can also include those who have been forced to flee due to human-made and natural disasters. The commonality that unites forcibly displaced populations is the forced nature of their displacement (i.e. the lack of choice or false choice to flee) and the need to seek safety in a country other than the one they consider to be their home.

For the purposes of this tool, **case management** is defined as a method of providing services in which a professional case worker assess the needs of a client and the client’s family, when appropriate, and arranges, coordinates, provides, monitors, evaluates and advocates for a package of services to meet the specific client’s complex needs. Case management addresses both the individual’s expressed needs as well as the state of the social system in which the case worker and client operate, therefore interventions occur at both the client and systems levels. This means working with clients on individual level change through accessing needed services and opportunities and working with and without clients on systems level change to improve access, remedy inequitable systems, and create stronger opportunities for clients and communities. Throughout the provision of case management, case workers and clients develop strong relationships that are predicated on mutual respect, equity in care and access, a commitment to do no harm, the right to self-determination, and a client-centered, strengths-based, and trauma-informed approach.

1.2 Creation of the Benchmarks

The Benchmarks were created by a group of practitioners, technical advisors, and researchers working at or affiliated with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with the goal of developing a measurement tool that is relevant to the key aspects of case management services provided to forcibly displaced populations in the United States. The development process began with the creation of a unified Theory of Change (Appendix 1) for Safety & Wellness Case Management, followed by a review of existing case management measurement tools and the iterative drafting of the Benchmarks during which each category was discussed in detail and stress-tested with practical experience and cases.

This was followed by a more formal testing process which included the development of three case vignettes to be used as test cases for the Benchmarks. Thirty-six volunteers from different Safety & Wellness Case Management programs at the IRC were then recruited to read the three vignettes and score them using the Benchmarks. This process illuminated categories for which additional information was needed to improve inter-rater reliability. The working group made adjustments and conducted a secondary level of testing in which the Benchmarks were found to have inter-rater reliability when the raters receive training.

How to Use the Benchmarks

The Benchmarks are a case management tool to document progress towards client well-being and goals. They are also meant to be used as a tool to help caseworkers in the process of assessing for needs, identifying strengths and resources, setting goals, and providing resources and services.

The Benchmarks are applicable to case management programs that aim to improve outcomes related to safety, health, economic well-being, education, and power for clients over a specified period that is at least six months in duration. This can include case management programs that serve:

- Survivors of Crime, Torture, and/or Trafficking
- Asylum-Seekers
- Unaccompanied Minors
- Individuals in Intensive Case Management (Preferred Communities Grant)

2.1 Frequency of Use

The Benchmarks are meant to be used at least two times:

- At the onset of case management as a part of intake and assessment, and
- At six-month intervals from intake, and
- At case closing.

For longer case management programs, the benchmarks can be used at six-month intervals from intake. The Benchmarks may also be used at times of significant change, for example, global events like pandemics, or localized events such as natural disasters. They can help to understand changing needs for individuals and to systematically document changes in stability for groups of clients at pivotal moments in time.

2.2 Categories of Support

The Benchmarks are a compilation of 15 categories of support. These categories are meant to represent the main areas of case management work done in medium to long term case management focused on improving safety, health, and power. This means that the 15 categories are not exhaustive and do not include all the potential areas in which clients may set goals or seek services. For example, a client may enroll in case management services with a goal of pursuing professional certification in mechanics in the US to improve their access to and control over resources and sense of self-efficacy. In the goal setting process, you may set a goal with the client to enroll in a mechanics certification course. This goal will not be reflected in a category specific to professional certifications or education; however, it is still an important component of the client's case management services.

The Benchmarks are meant to support caseworkers in identifying needs and progress and are NOT intended to replace working collaboration with clients to identify their own service goals. Clients may score low on a category of support (i.e. score 1 or 2) and may choose NOT to include that category in their goals for case management. For example, a client may score 1 or 2 in the area of English Language Skills and choose NOT to identify learning English as a goal. This self-determination is an important component of the case management process and caseworkers are responsible for respecting their clients' rights to self-determination, especially as it pertains to goal setting.

In this manual, there are sections below each category of support that explain the purpose of measuring the category, define key terms, provide suggested assessment questions to help gather information pertaining to the category, and provide suggested responses for categories in which a response is necessary for scores of 1 or 2.

2.3 Levels of Need

Each category of support should be scored based on the level of need. This scoring is defined as:

- Significant (1) meaning the client has immediate/imminent unmet needs in this category and/or may be in crisis in the category
- Moderate (2) meaning the client has emerging needs in this category
- Some (3) meaning the client can meet some of the needs in this category
- Minimal (4) meaning the client can meet most or all of the needs in this category.

Each category has specific examples of the criteria for each level of need, meaning that a client in 'significant needs' for Food Security will have different examples and indicators than that same client being in 'significant needs' for Transportation.

All of the individual categories provide an option for **“not enough information at this time”** and a few of the categories have an option of a specified version of **“not applicable,”** for example, Employment has the option of **“not currently seeking employment.”**

What happens if I don't know enough information to fill out a section?

When working with clients, especially at the time of intake/enrollment, you may not have enough information to assess them in various areas in which case, categories may be scored as **“not enough information at this time”**. Once you have enough information, that score will change to an actual score during a follow-up assessment. For example, if a client enrolls in case management with an urgent need pertaining to medical care for a chronic health condition, you might focus on that health condition initially and not immediately assess for or discuss legal needs. At the time of the initial benchmarks, you would then choose “not enough information” for Legal – Non-immigration and Legal – Immigration with the intent to discuss legal needs and status with the client for future benchmarks.

What do I do if someone falls in between categories?

If you feel a client falls between levels of need, you have the option to choose a half increment. For example, if you're not sure if a client has moderate needs (2) or some needs (3) in a particular area because they seem to span both levels, you can score them at 2.5.

What if I think a client is at 1 and they think they are at 3?

If you feel there is a discrepancy between the client's perception of where they are and your assessment of where they are, **default to the client's perception**. For example, if a client feels that they are unsafe in their community, but you feel that they are objectively safe in their community, score them according to the client's perception of safety.

When assessing a client, it is imperative that you focus on ONE CATEGORY at a time. Although some categories may overlap and/or influence each other, you should look at the client through the lens of just the category they are currently evaluating. For example, if a client does not know any English and does not have any English language supports, but they have many friends and social supports and are able to navigate their community safety and easily because they live in a community that largely speaks their first language, they will still score 1 in English Language Skills but will score higher on Community Safety and Support System.

2.4 Individual and Household Information

The Benchmarks are meant to represent the state of an individual at a moment in time. Since Safety & Wellness Case Management programs are often focused on an individual who is enrolled in services, their key family members and supports (biological or chosen), the ratings for each category are meant to reflect the individual's state. However, many individuals in Safety & Wellness Case Management will also seek out support for and from their key family members and supports (biological or chosen). In these cases, the ratings for each category will also take into consideration the state of the client's family/support system. When individuals within a client's family/support system have different situations, please score the category with respect to the individual with the highest need. An example of this may be that you are working with an adult to help them access care and resources for a chronic health condition. They are your primary client; however, their mother is a great source of support for them and often helps them navigate doctor's appointments and lives with them. They have asked you to also work with their mother in an effort to help them reach their service goals. In this case, you would also take into consideration the mother's safety and wellness when completing the benchmarks.

In cases in which the individual being served is a caregiver or there are minors in the individual's home, the relationship safety and mental health of the minors should be considered in the corresponding categories. The assessment may not include the minor in these cases, but you will always want to act on the information received via the caregiver(s). Additionally, when the individual being served is a minor, the minor's adult caregiver and their needs and resources should be considered in the completion of ratings across categories.

2.5 Incorporating the Benchmarks into your M&E Plan

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, or Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan is a document that guides the collection, management, analysis, and use of data throughout the life of the project/program or funding period. M&E plans describe the expected project results; what data will be collected, by whom, when, and how to monitor and evaluate the project; how data will be stored and protected; how data will be analyzed and who will be involved in the process; resources needed to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities; and how data and project learning will be used and shared.

Having an M&E plan can help ensure that your project/program is high-quality, equitable, and effective. An M&E plan can help you understand how your program is performing, whom it is reaching, and any disparities in access or outcomes among target groups.

The Benchmarks can be used as an **outcome measure** for your program. When developing your project's M&E plan the first step is to define your objective and outcome(s). To identify your project's outcomes or objectives think about: *What is the end goal of your project? What is your project hoping to achieve?*

You can organize this in a logframe. A logframe is a type of logic model that uses a table or matrix to summarize the key elements of a project strategy: the project **objective**, intended **outcomes**, planned **outputs**, and major **activities**. It can help to explain how a project or program's activities contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended or observed impacts¹.

It also outlines indicators that will be used to measure progress, the source of data (means of verification), and assumptions necessary for project success. Logframes help you and your team articulate (and remember) what you intend to achieve and what you will measure to determine whether you have achieved what you hoped to achieve. A good logframe is the foundation of your team's monitoring and evaluation plan. You can find an example logframe from Switchboard.

¹<https://www.betterevaluation.org/frameworks-guides/managers-guide-evaluation/scope/describe-theory-change>

Selecting indicators

Your M&E plan should include any indicators (donor-required or otherwise) needed to measure & communicate results. Indicators are the variables that are tracked to measure changes or achievements in connection with a project/program. Indicators must be directly related to the result they are measuring and should ideally be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timebound).

Develop realistic targets for each indicator and determine data disaggregation categories in line with data protection rules and with real possibilities to collect it.

Your indicators used to measure your outputs, outcomes, and/or objectives can be framed around the Benchmarks.

Example: If your outcome description is “People prevent or manage mental health conditions or symptoms”, your indicator may be ‘% of clients in xyz projects/programs assessed who effectively prevent and manage mental health symptoms and stressors at case closeout’ and could be calculated as # of clients who score a ‘4’ on the ‘Mental Health’ benchmark over the total number of clients who have answered this question in the assessment.

Role and Responsibilities

In your M&E plan, you would want to be specific about roles and responsibilities. Who is collecting the data? Who is entering the data? Who is analyzing the data?

Data collection, storage, and protection

You will need to be specific in your M&E plan about where data will be entered and how it will be kept secure. If your organization already has a data management system or platform, try to integrate the Benchmarks into it and enter the data electronically. If your organization uses a paper-based system, you could enter data into an excel spreadsheet, or can enter the data directly into an excel spreadsheet. You can use this example. Always be vigilant in keeping sensitive data secure and confidential.

Data Quality

During the program/project, it is important to monitor data quality. Conducting frequent data reviews with staff is a good practice to troubleshoot any data quality issues and to provide additional context to the data. You can ask to what extent does data look accurate? What data quality issues exist if any, and why? See if there are any particular patterns that may need more investigation. Is data missing from a particular group of individuals? Answering these questions will help ensure that data is accurate.

2.6 Using the Data

Data collected from the Benchmarks allows us to see the results of our services for different populations and make data-driven decisions to improve the services you provide. On a regular basis, it is important to review and discuss the data collected with your team. When analyzing results, you could compare the percentage of clients who scored ‘4’ on the initial Benchmarks with those who scored ‘4’ on the final Benchmarks. You can also choose to compare trends over time by comparing the percentage change of clients whose score has improved between initial and final Benchmarks. Disaggregating the scores by different demographics (e.g. nationality, gender, immigration status, language) allows you to notice whether there are any disparities in outcomes across different groups. You can use this example for some ideas on how to analyze your data.

The guiding questions below can help you analyze the data:

- What stories does the data tell us?
- What trends are we seeing?
 - Are trends different by demographic?
- Are there any changes in results over time? If so, why?
- Are we achieving the results we hoped to achieve, equally for different populations, regardless of gender, age, and race? If not, why not?
- What successes do we see?
 - Where is there room for improvement?
- What action do we need to take to improve results?
 - Have these actions been documented in your [data review and action plan](#)?

The indicator data captured using the Benchmarks should be used to determine whether intended outcomes/ results outlined in M&E plans/logframes for S&W projects have been achieved and should be reported to donors as required. Additionally, results can be used in grant writing and development to highlight clients' needs and advocate for resources.

Categories of Support

Communication

This category measures the client's access to communication tools and ability to effectively use them to conduct activities of daily living. This is especially relevant in situations in which remote work is necessary or most accessible. This category includes access to services such as phone/cell phone service and internet.

Key Definitions

Communication methods

Phone service/minutes, texting, email, etc.

Reliable

Able to use and access when wanted/needed

Unreliable

Not available for use when wanted/needed

Pro Tip

Often times only one member of the family has regular access to the family's single cell phone. Other members may be allowed to use the cell phone, but they must ask for it and get it from the member who has regular access. In that case, the client would have "access to a shared communication method" and would most likely fall under category 2

Suggested Assessment Questions

- What is the best way for me to contact you? Phone, email, etc.?
- Do you (or does your household) have access to technology/communication methods (computer, phone, etc.) at home?
 - If not, are you able to access that somewhere else (school, library, etc.)?
- Are there times when you don't have access to your [communication methods] or it doesn't work?
 - If I cannot reach you on your [preferred contact method], is there someone else I can contact to get in touch with you?
- Do you feel like you can use your [communication methods] easily?
 - Do you know how to do most things on your [communication method]? Send a text, make a call, send an email, etc.?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Provide client with a preloaded/prepaid phone for emergency use; work to develop a plan for sustainability

Moderate Needs (2)

- Work to develop a plan with client for sustainability of communication methods

Communication, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Communication	Not enough information	No access to communication methods (phone, tablet, messaging device, etc.)		Has access to shared communication methods that are frequently unreliable/unavailable		Has personal/private communication methods with inconsistent and/or unstable service (minutes, internet, data, etc.)		Has personal/private communication methods with consistent and stable service (minutes, internet, data, etc.)

Community Safety

This category measures the client's perceived and actual safety in their community. It includes having knowledge of and willingness to access community safety resources and knowledge of how to navigate and maintain safety in the community. It is important to note that levels 2 and 3 include a willingness to access community safety resources which is directly related to the individual's perception of those resources as safe, accessible, and capable of helping. This category includes exploitation and trafficking in community settings as well as feelings of belonging and oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia.

Key Definitions

Community safety resources

Any resources, services or skills within a community that promote, encourage or ensure safety. These often include informal community safety services such as community watch associations and community safety networks and formal emergency response services such as police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel.

Unsafe

Able or likely to cause harm, damage or loss

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Are there places in your community where you feel uncomfortable or unsafe?
 - Are there places here where you feel comfortable and safe?
- Do you feel safe walking around your community, meaning the area where you live?
 - Do you feel safe doing things like going to the grocery store?
- If you are feeling unsafe in your community, what do you do?
 - Are you able to call anyone?
 - Would you feel comfortable calling emergency response services like the police, firefighters, or emergency medical personnel?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1) and Moderate Needs (2)

- Create a community safety plan with the client; discuss and connect to formal and informal community safety resources

Community Safety, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1) 1.5	Moderate Needs (2) 2.5	Some Need (3) 3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Community Safety	Not enough information	Feels unsafe/in danger of being harmed in the community most of the time; active ostracization; no knowledge of available community safety resources; no knowledge of how to maintain safety in the community	Feels unsafe/in danger of being harmed in the community some of the time; knows about community safety resources but is unable or unwilling to access them; knows how to maintain safety in the community but is unable or unwilling to do so	Feels safe in the community most of the time; knows about community safety resources and is able and willing to access them; knows how to maintain safety in the community and does so most of the time	Feels safe in community; knows about community safety resources and feels confident in accessing them; feels confident about navigating and maintaining safety in the community

English Language Skills

This category assesses the client's functional English language skills in relation to completing activities of daily living. It is important to note that many individuals can complete many activities of daily living in a language other than English; however, this category specifically measures English language ability as it is the primary language spoken in the U.S. An individual can have a low score in English Language Skills and can still thrive in their community. Additionally, while the ability to request interpretation is within the control of individuals, the ability to ACCESS interpretation is outside of their control and may be a point for further advocacy. This is a category in which immediate action **does NOT** need to be taken if a client scores as Significant Needs (1) or Moderate Needs (2).

Key Definitions

ASL

American Sign Language

Bi/multilingual supports

Supportive individuals such as family or community members who speak the client's preferred language and English. This can include technology such as free digital translation services.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Can you tell me the language you feel most comfortable speaking in?
- How do you communicate with family members or others?
 - (If nonverbal) Do you use sign language? Are you interested in learning American Sign Language?
- Are you able to understand English?
 - Do you know any English phrases or words?
- Do you have any trouble in day-to-day situations (i.e. employment, children's school, using public transportation, etc.) because of limited English skills?
 - Do you have friends or family that can help you when you need to use English?
 - Do you know when and how you can access interpreters?

English Language Skills, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
English Language Skills	Not enough information	Does not know any English/ASL; does not know how to request interpretation; no access to bi/multilingual supports that can help access systems and services		Can communicate a few Significant Needs words/phrases in English/ASL; can request interpretation but with varying success; has access to bi/multilingual supports that can help access systems and services		Can communicate conversationally in English/ASL; limited or no reading and writing of English; can reliably request and access interpretation		Reads, writes and communicates English/ASL sufficiently to navigate most day-to-day situations

Employment

This category assesses an individual's current situation with regards to paid employment. It includes working in a safe and respectful environment, earning income for the work being done, benefits associated with paid employment such as health insurance and paid time off, and the individual's knowledge of their rights as an employee. This category is unique in that it has an option for "Not currently seeking employment" – this is meant to reflect individuals who are not working and are not interested in pursuing paid employment.

Key Definitions

Barriers

Barriers are defined as any condition, resource, or lack of resource that can negatively impact a person's ability to get a job or maintain employment. This can include concrete resources such as transportation, childcare and appropriate clothing and intangible conditions, such as lasting impacts of trauma making it difficult for someone to concentrate, maintain a schedule, etc.

Abusive or exploitative employment

Any employment situation in which an employer is unfairly benefitting from their employee's work. This is inclusive of labor trafficking and labor violations in which employers violate federal, state, or local laws related to the workplace.¹

Needs

Needs refers to any needs which an individual intends to apply earned income towards; this can be basic needs such as food and housing or can be other needs such as entertainment, spending money, etc. "Needs" are meant to be defined by the client.

Inadequate benefits

Refers to workplace benefits that do not meet industry standards or the clients needs. For example, this would include not having any paid time off, not having health insurance or having prohibitively expensive health insurance.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- How do you currently earn money?
- Tell me about your job.
 - How many hours do you work per day and week?
 - Do you get paid for all for all of the hours that you work?
 - Do you have documentation for working?
 - Do you have benefits such as health insurance or paid time off?
- Do you know your rights as a worker?
- Has anyone where you work ever hurt you or threatened you?
- Do you make enough money to provide for your/your family's needs?
- Are you facing any challenges that make it hard for you to work?

Employment, cont'd.

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1) and Moderate Needs (2)

- Connect the client to internal programming or community partners to provide information on basic employment rights and safety considerations (i.e. know your rights, workers' rights)
- If the client indicates they are experiencing abusive or exploitative behavior at their work, reach out to a worker's rights agency or anti-trafficking program

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Employment	Not enough information	Unemployed and wants employment; no employment authorization; abusive or exploitative employment; unable to work due to barriers		Current employment hours or wages not adequate to meet needs; no or inadequate benefits; working without employment authorization; difficulty maintaining employment due to barriers		Employment has hours or wages to meet needs; inadequate benefits; understands workplace rights; limited opportunities for advancement; barriers to employment occasionally impact work hours/performance		Employed with adequate pay and benefits; advancement potential; reliable and affordable childcare (if applicable); aware of workplace rights and entitlements

Food Security

This category measures the client's ability to obtain and prepare appropriate food, both in terms of accessing enough food and accessing the types of food the client wants.

Key Definitions

Caloric needs

The amount of calories consumed daily to stay healthy and alive. This varies greatly depending on individual age, need, activity level, and overall health.ⁱ

Culturally congruent food

Food that corresponds to individual and collective customs and preferences

Nutritional needs

The nutrients needed to stay healthy and alive. These include protein, energy, carbohydrates, fats and lipids, and a range of vitamins, minerals and elements.ⁱⁱ

Suggested Assessment Questions Modified HFIAS (Household Food Insecurity Access Scale)

- In the past month, have you worried that you would not have enough food?
 - Did you have to decrease the **amount of food** you wanted to eat because there was not enough food available to you?
 - Were you unable to eat the kinds of food you **preferred**?
 - Were you able to eat different types of food, like fruits, vegetables, grains, and meats/beans?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Provide client with food immediately and resources for obtaining food for the rest of the day/week

Moderate Needs (2)

- Work to develop a plan with client for sustainably accessing food (food pantries, SNAP, etc.)

Food Security, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Food Security	Not enough information	No food or means to purchase, access, or prepare it		Has food and means to prepare it but it may not be enough to consistently meet caloric needs		Has enough food to reliably meet caloric needs; limited access to healthy, fresh, culturally congruent food		Has enough food to reliably meet nutritional and caloric needs; able to reliably access healthy, fresh, culturally congruent food

Housing

This category assesses the client's current housing stability and the general safety of the housing.

Key Definitions

Houseless

No secured place to sleep night after night

Immediate future

Within the next three to six months, and according to current and reasonably predicted knowledge of resources and options

Overcrowded

Condition in which the health or safety of the individuals are impacted due to the number of people in a home. Overcrowding is also often cited as having more than 2 people per bedroom in a household, though this is subjective.ⁱ

Unsanitary

Dirty or unhealthy and likely to cause disease or injury

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Can you tell me about where you currently live? Who do you live with?
 - Does everyone have a place to sleep in your home?
- Do you need to pay for your housing? If so, are you able to pay each month?
- Do you have any concerns about the safety or upkeep of your housing (i.e. mold, infestations, repairs needed, etc.)?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Create housing safety plan with client to identify a safe place they can sleep tonight; help individuals access eviction prevention; contact tenant's rights agency

Moderate Needs (2)

- Work to develop a plan with client for sustainability/improvement of housing conditions; help individuals access eviction prevention; contact tenant's rights agency

Housing, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Housing	Not enough information	Currently houseless or facing court mandated eviction/ foreclosure notice; utilities turned off with no means to turn back on; home is dangerous, unsafe and/or unsanitary		At risk of losing housing; residing in temporary housing (shelter, motel, etc.); utilities are regularly turned off; home has areas that are unsafe and/or unsanitary or is overcrowded		Has stable housing for the immediate future; can pay for utilities; home is generally safe and somewhat maintained		Secure housing with ability to consistently pay rent or mortgage and utilities while also able to meet other basic needs; home is safe and maintained

Legal Representation / Information

This category assesses the client's current legal needs related to legal representation by an attorney and/or information about legal processes, including but not limited to immigration, civil, criminal and family law. This is a category in which immediate action **does NOT** need to be taken if a client scores as Significant Needs (1) or Moderate Needs (2); however, action should be taken to help resolve the legal needs.

Key Definitions

Legal consultation

The act of seeking advice or counsel from an accredited and licensed legal professional. This is a meeting that happens before the attorney/lawyer is retained to represent the client.

Legal information

General factual information about the law and the legal process. It is NOT giving advice but is presenting neutral information about the law and process.

Legal representation

The legal work that a licensed attorney/lawyer performs on behalf of a client, which can include representation in court.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Do you have any issues that may require a lawyer to resolve or may involve a court (divorce, discrimination, arrest, etc.)?
- Are you working with an attorney/lawyer for any issues not related to immigration?
- Do you have any questions about legal needs?

Legal Representation / Information, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Legal Representation/ Information	Not enough information	No access to needed legal consultation, information, or legal representation		Has some access to needed legal consultation, information or legal representation but it is insufficient		Has sufficient access to needed legal, consultation, information and/or legal representation		Is not in need of legal services for any reason

Immigration Status

This category assesses the client's status related to immigration status and options for resolution of those needs. This is a category in which immediate action **does NOT** need to be taken if a client scores as Significant Needs (1) or Moderate Needs (2); however, action should be taken to help resolve the immigration needs.

Key Definitionsⁱ

Removal/deportation proceedings

Administrative proceedings to determine an individual's removability under US immigration law; also referred to as "defensive" asylum process

Limited status

Protected status given to eligible nationals of designated countries or who eligible foreign nationals who have experienced particular conditions; this status is limited in term with a date or condition of expiry, for example PRUCOL (Protected Under the Color of Law)

Temporary status

Also referred to as a temporary protected status (TPS), is given to eligible nationals of designated countries and provides a work permit and stay of deportation to foreign nationals in the US

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Are you working with an attorney/lawyer for any issues related to your immigration history or status?
- Do you know what your immigration status is in the United States?
 - Do you know about what options there are for citizenship?
 - Do you have any questions about your immigration status or history?
- Do you have any issues that may require a lawyer to resolve or may involve a court?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Connect the client to a legal provider immediately to assess options for preventing deportation. Support the client with a [family deportation safety plan](#).

Moderate Needs (2)

- Refer the client to immigration legal services. Assist the client in calling USCIS if applicable.

Immigration Status, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Immigration Status	Not enough information	Is in removal/ deportation proceedings		Is without status or is applying for protection/status		Has temporary or limited status (TPS, CAT, DACA, etc.)		Has citizenship or an immigration status with a pathway to citizenship (LPR/ green card, refugee, asylee, T-Visa, U-Visa, SIJS, etc.)

Mental Health

This category measures the client's emotional wellbeing, ability to cope with stressors, and substance use. In cases where there are children, it also measures the caregivers' ability to support the child's emotional wellbeing.

Key Definitions

Mental health or substance use issues

Any distress experienced by an individual due to diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health needs including extreme stress (i.e. uncertain immigration status) and harmful use of substances to cope

Actively taking steps to promote mental health and wellness

The actions an individual takes individually or with others to positively influence their current and future mental health and wellness. This could include practicing self-care, regularly exercising, engaging in ongoing therapy, or regularly seeking out support systems.

Appropriate to age and development

The act of tailoring expectations, materials, and processes to the age and developmental stage of the individual

Developmental milestones

Acquired functions or skills that children predictably develop as they age. For more age-specific milestones, access the CDC's Developmental Milestonesⁱ

Medical/genetic regression

When a child loses an acquired function or fails to progress beyond a prolonged plateau after a period of relatively normal development; in this case, referring to regression caused by a medical or genetic condition or disease

Minor

Anyone under the age of 18 and therefore legally defined as minors

Negative consequences

Negative consequences can include personal harm or harm to others (physical or emotional), damage to property, and interaction with authorities due to substance use

Youth

Applies to young adults and teenagers (generally aged 16 to 24), depending on developmental status and maturity

Suggested Assessment Questions

- How do you feel about your life most days?
 - Is there anything that causes you stress or unhappiness?
- Do you feel that you are able to manage the things in life that cause you stress?
- Can you tell me about how you spend your time?
 - What things do you like to do?
 - How do you manage stressors in your life?
- Are you concerned about any of your children's development or behavior?

Where resources exist, you can use the [RHS-15](#) as an assessment tool to help measure mental health

Mental Health, cont'd.

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1) & Moderate Needs (2)

- Connect client to crisis response services, if necessary; create a coping safety plan, as appropriate; work to develop a plan for sustainability; follow your office's suicide prevention guidance for clients presenting with suicidal ideation

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Mental Health	Not enough information	Youth & Adult Mental health or substance use issues are interfering with ability to manage day to day functioning, personal safety or safety ofvw others around them; danger to self or others		Youth & Adults Mental health or substance use issues make it more difficult to function but still able to meet activities of daily living with support; currently in SUDs treatment or recently sober		Youth & Adults Able to effectively manage mental health symptoms and stressors so that there is little impact on daily life AND no or rare misuse of substances but does not result in negative consequences		Youth & Adults Able to effectively manage mental health symptoms and stressors so that there is little to no impact on daily life AND actively taking steps to promote mental health and wellness AND no substance misuse
	Not enough information/ No minors in the home	Minor Non-medical/genetic regression in behavior and/or in reaching developmental milestones; unable to recover from emotional upset appropriate to age and development		Minor Non-medical/genetic delays in reaching developmental milestones but no regression; difficulty recovering from emotional upset appropriate to age and development		Minor Reaching most developmental milestones; can identify strategies to manage emotional upset appropriate to age and development		Minor Reaching developmental milestones; successfully utilizing strategies to manage emotional upset appropriate to age and development

Healthcare

This category measures the client's need for physical and/or dental care, access to healthcare and health insurance.

Key Definitions

Healthcare supports or services

Inclusive of screening, diagnoses, treatment, therapies, medications and healthcare supplies and the means to pay for those services.

Barriers

Any condition, resource, or lack of resource that can negatively impact a person's ability to access medical care. This can include things like medical/dental coverage, interpretation, unable or unwilling to manage a chronic condition, and inability to access transportation. This can also include beliefs that are barriers to care such as religious beliefs, misunderstanding or mistrust of medical systems, or a lack of confidence or understanding of treatment options and prognosis (i.e. success rates of early detected treatable cancers, such as breast cancer).

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Do you (or does anyone in your family) have immediate physical or dental health problems or concerns?
- What do you do if you (or someone in your family) is in need of medical or dental care?
 - Are you able to access medical or dental care when you need it?
- Do you (does your family) have health insurance?
- Do you (does anyone in your care) have any medical conditions that you need to take regular medication or need regular services to address?
 - If so, do you have reliable access to the medication/services you need?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Connect client to immediate medical or dental care; create a plan for sustained medical/dental care

Moderate Needs (2)

- Work to develop a plan with client for sustainability of medical/dental care

Healthcare, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Healthcare	Not enough information	Unable to access any needed healthcare supports or services		Able to access some healthcare supports or services but it is insufficient		Able to access needed healthcare supports or services but unable to do so independently		Able to access needed healthcare supports or services and can do so independently;

Relationship Safety

This category measures the client's experience of safety and well-being within relationships. This measures both adults and minors in the home, regardless of whether the minors are enrolled in services. This category includes abuse by an intimate partner, child abuse and neglect, and abuse perpetrated by family members or individuals with access to the client and their family.

Key Definitions

Caregiving skills

Inclusive of age and developmentally appropriate discipline, interaction, communication, nurturing behavior, and skills to promote positive attachment, etc.

Communication patterns and behaviors

Ways in which individuals interact and communicate with each other that are often repeated, cyclical, or predictable. These can be both positive and negative.

Minor

Anyone under the age of 18 and therefore protected under child abuse and neglect laws

Safety resources

Any resources, services or skills that promote, encourage or ensure safety. These often include informal community safety services such as safe individuals and community safety networks and formal services such as domestic violence service providers, child welfare agencies, police, and emergency medical personnel.

Safety plan

Personalized, practical plan to help avoid dangerous situations and to know the best way to react when in danger

Unsafe

There is imminent risk of severe physical or psychological harm caused by abuse, neglect (in the case of an adult in need of care or a minor), or exploitation

Youth

Applies to young adults and teenagers (generally aged 16 to 24), depending on developmental status and maturity

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Tell me about your relationship with your family members (partner, children, parents, etc.).
 - Do you ever feel unsafe or unhappy in those relationships?
 - Do you feel unsafe in your home?
 - How often do you feel unsafe in your home?
 - Are you or is someone in your home currently experiencing distress?
- **Where resources exist, and staff have been appropriately trained you can use the [Bridge to Safety](#) screening as an assessment tool to help measure relationship safety**

Relationship Safety, cont'd.

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1) & Moderate Needs (2)

- Create a safety plan with the client, including their safe individuals, as appropriate; discuss and connect to formal and informal safety resources, as appropriate. If a child is at risk of imminent harm, follow your local mandatory reporting guidance.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1) 1.5	Moderate Needs (2) 2.5	Some Need (3) 3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Relationship Safety	Not enough information	Youth & Adult Household and/or relationship is unsafe AND client does not have current connection to safety resources and/or a safety plan in place; there are significant barriers to client seeking safety	Youth & Adults Household and/or relationship is unsafe AND client has current connection to safety resources and/or a safety plan; there are no significant known barriers to seeking safety	Youth & Adults Household and/or relationship is safe; there are some unhealthy patterns of conflict management, communication and/or behaviors	Youth & Adults Household and/or relationship is safe; communication patterns and behaviors are healthy and supportive
	Not enough information/ No minors in the home	Minor Current known child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment; minor is exposed to violence; caregiver(s) is unable to support child emotionally	Minor Suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment; caregiver(s) unable to consistently use caregiving skills	Minor No known or suspected violence or abuse in the home; caregiver(s) occasionally struggle to use caregiving skills; caregiver(s) express difficulty with minor	Minor No known or suspected violence or abuse in the home; caregiver(s) consistently provides healthy/nurturing caregiving

Rights & Resources

This category measures the client's ability to access the benefits, information, and rights they are entitled to. It also measures the client's ability to access and control what is done with their resources.

Key Definitions

Rights

The individual and collective rights, legal protections, and broader entitlements under the law.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Do you have all of your identification documents?
 - If not, who has them? Are you able to get them when you need them?
- If you need to access money or resources, are you able to do that on your own?
- How do you manage your finances?
 - Who is responsible for paying bills?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- Provide client with information about their rights and options for remedy; work to develop a plan for sustainability

Rights & Resources, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Rights and Resources	Not enough information	Rights are being actively violated including being denied access to personal resources/documents		Rights are being actively violated including being denied access to personal resources/documents AND client is connected to remedies		No known rights violations AND client has limited understanding of their rights		No known rights violations AND client knows their rights, how to claim, secure and exercise them

Support System

This category measures an individual's sense of connectedness to others in their life, including formal and informal supports such as family, friends, community members, and social organizations such as religious institutions and other community groups.

Key Definitions

Community networks

Consists of a wide range of community-level groups, organizations and collectives that can provide support. This can include affinity groups (LGBTQ, race, ethnic, gender groups), religious groups, community collectives, etc.

Reliable

Able to use and access when wanted/needed.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- Can you tell me about the people in your life that you can talk to?
 - Are you able to reach out to them whenever you need support?
- Do you belong to any community groups or organizations?
- Can you tell me about your faith and the role it plays in your life?

Suggested Response Actions

Significant Needs (1)

- If the client is being actively ostracized by the community, assess their perception of safety and develop a safety plan; work with the client to identify supportive individuals and develop a plan for continued engagement

Support System, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Support System	Not enough information	Individuals and/or community networks/ systems actively causing harm or distress		Unable to identify anyone who can provide them practical or emotional support		Can identify individuals and community networks/ systems who can provide them practical or emotional support but they are unreliable or unavailable		Can identify individuals and community networks/ systems who can provide them consistent and reliable practical or emotional support

Transportation

This category measures the client's ability to access and use transportation methods to get from one place to another safely and reliably. This is a category in which immediate action **does NOT** need to be taken if a client scores as Significant Needs (1) or Moderate Needs (2); however, action should be taken to help resolve the transportation needs.

Key Definitions

Barriers

Any condition, resource, or lack of resource that can negatively impact a person's ability to access or use transportation. This can include things like public transportation hours are limited, cost is prohibitive, or transportation infrastructure is limited, for example.

Transportation

Methods used to get from one place to another. This can include driving, walking, riding a bicycle, taking public transportation or securing private transportation such as taxis and rideshares.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- How do you usually get from one place to another?
 - How do you locate and reach new destinations?
- Do you have access to transportation when you need it?
 - What makes it hard for you to get transportation when you need it?
- Have you had difficulty getting transportation to work, doctor's appointments or other places when you need it?
 - What makes it difficult?

Transportation, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Transportation	Not enough information	No access to transportation; does not know how to navigate transportation options		Sometimes has transportation needs met; transportation may be available but client faces significant barriers		Has transportation needs met most of the time; transportation is available but occasional barriers exist		Has consistent and reliable transportation that meets most travel needs

Self-Efficacy & Advocacy

After completing all of the other benchmarks, the case manager is meant to reflect on the client's general sense of self-efficacy and ability to advocate for themselves across all the categories. Because this is a category for reflection, there do not need to be any specific assessment questions, though some suggestions are included if the case manager has a difficult time discerning the client's sense of self-efficacy and advocacy. This is a category in which immediate action **does NOT** need to be taken if a client scores as Significant Needs (1) or Moderate Needs (2).

Key Definitions

Challenges

A task or situation that tests someone's abilities

Personal rights

The rights an individual has to personal security, liberty, and private property – they include Constitutional rights such as the right to assemble in public places, express one's views, and determine religious beliefs.

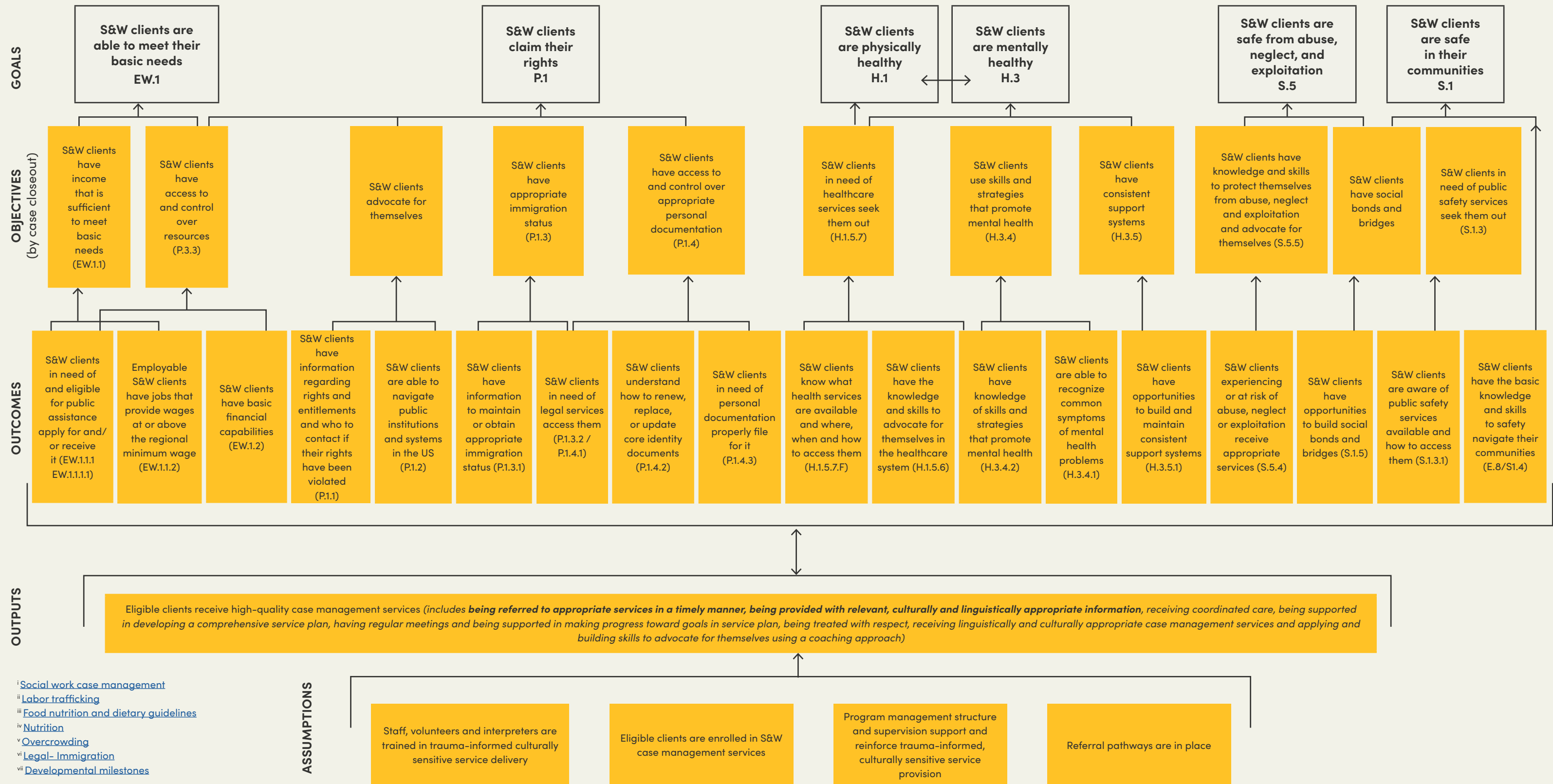
Suggested Assessment Questions

- Can you tell me about what you do when you're faced with a challenging situation?
- When things don't go the way you had hoped or planned, how do you respond?

Self-Efficacy & Advocacy, cont'd.

Category	Not enough information	Significant Needs (1)	1.5	Moderate Needs (2)	2.5	Some Need (3)	3.5	Minimal Needs (4)
Self-Efficacy & Advocacy	Not enough information	Unable to try to overcome challenges; needs support and assistance in advocating for needs to be met in most areas of life; no knowledge of personal rights		Tries to overcome challenges but inconsistently or ineffectively; needs assistance advocating for many needs to be met; resources; limited knowledge of personal rights		Consistently tries to overcome challenges; occasionally needs assistance advocating for needs to be met; knowledge of personal rights		Able to overcome most challenges; able to independently advocate for needs to be met; knowledge of personal rights

Appendix 1 – Safety & Wellness Case Management Theory of Change



ⁱ Social work case management
ⁱⁱ Labor trafficking
ⁱⁱⁱ Food nutrition and dietary guidelines
^{iv} Nutrition
^v Overcrowding
^{vi} Legal- Immigration
^{vii} Developmental milestones

