When providing services for runaway and homeless youth, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Though many youth experience homelessness for similar reasons and many face similar challenges, every young person's specific circumstances differ. And each young person has a unique set of strengths that can help support their transition to adulthood.

This list will help you find screening and assessment tools you can use to decide what types of interventions and services each young person in your care needs. Screening and assessment means using credible tools and practices to evaluate each youth's individual strengths and needs. Screening involves brief instruments that check for things like traumatic stress and mental health problems, and can identify certain youth who need more thorough diagnostic evaluations and treatment. Assessment involves evaluating multiple aspects of social, emotional, and behavioral competencies and functioning in order to inform service planning and monitor progress toward better outcomes.

Featured tools include those that are appropriate for use across various federal programs for youth and young adults generally between the ages of 12 and 24 and that are low cost or in the public domain. The exception to this low cost/no cost criterion are monitoring instruments that can be implemented at the system level, since it is assumed that the cost of those instruments might be shared across multiple agencies or partners.

Evidence-Based Approach to Ending Youth Homelessness

As part of its effort to end youth homelessness by 2020, the federal government developed the Intervention Model for Unaccompanied Youth (PDF, 2.9MB). The model recommends runaway and homeless youth programs do the following, among other things:

- Use evidence-based screening and assessment tools when youth enter a program.[1]

- Use the information from screening and assessment to choose evidence-based interventions that can give young people stable housing, permanent connections, improved well-being, and opportunities for education and employment.

To help put the model into practice, the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) compiled this list of evidence-based, evidence-informed, and promising screening and assessment tools, in consultation with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and its youth workgroup partners. Some of the tools listed here have been tested on populations that are considered by researchers to have backgrounds or issues similar to runaway and homeless youth, such as at-risk or foster youth. Some were not tested exclusively on disadvantaged populations, but have demonstrated reliability and validity across multiple populations. FYSB and USICH do not necessarily endorse the tools included in the list.

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[1]The base of evidence showing how effective screening and assessment tools are, and how effective they are for distinct target populations is continually growing. In addition, new promising, potentially effective instruments are continually emerging. More information about understanding the continuum of evidence of effectiveness can be found at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Understanding Evidence (PDF, 875KB) guide. The levels of evidence as defined by the CDC are presented below:

- **Evidence-based Interventions:** These are well-supported interventions that have been found to be effective by at least two studies using well-controlled research designs that included randomized controlled trials with multiple follow-up assessments to track outcomes over time. Furthermore, the interventions have been tested in multiple settings, like outpatient clinics or in community programs.
- **Evidence-informed Interventions:** These are supported interventions that have shown effectiveness, with evidence drawn from studies using research designs other than randomized controlled trials, such as quasi-experimental research designs.
- **Promising Interventions:** These are interventions that may still be in the early phases of research. These interventions may show some level of effectiveness, but are based on studies that have used non-experimental designs, such as qualitative program evaluations and non-randomized pilot studies.

Not all of the tools are rated by the CDC, however. They appear in a variety of prominent federal, national, and academic databases that rate the effectiveness of interventions, and these entities may provide different ratings for the same intervention as a result of varying criteria for effectiveness. Therefore, the level of effectiveness for each intervention may be a composite of ratings reviewed from several databases and studies.

How to Use the List[2]

Consider the list a starting point. It includes tools that you can use to screen for common mental health or behavioral issues or assess young people's career readiness and life skills. To decide what tools best suit the needs of your programs and the youth you serve, you'll need to investigate each tool further. This list provides as much information as possible at the time the list was compiled.

First, we recommend that you review assessment databases and their ratings, such as the Substance Use Screening & Assessment Instruments Database at the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute at the University of Washington, the Educational Testing Service, and the Health Services and Sciences Research Resources database at the National Institutes of Health U.S. National Library of Medicine. More information about searching these sources as well as additional links to other instrument databases can be found at this compilation of instruments from the University of Vermont.

We also suggest that you look up the tools in this table in journal article databases like Google Scholar and PubMed Central. The ratings and the information in the articles will help you get a better sense of the tools you are interested in, and whether they are a good match for your organization's needs.

Next, we recommend that you contact the publisher(s) and ask the following questions:

- What qualifications do you need to obtain or purchase the tool? Some publishers require staff to have a bachelor's or master's degree to purchase the tool.

- What qualifications do you need to administer the tool? Some publishers require staff with an advanced degree to interpret and report results.

- What information do you need to provide to obtain a license to use the tool?

- How much does the tool cost?

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[2]Several instruments in the table list the level of Response to Intervention (RTI) on which they fit. The RTI method is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of young people with specific learning and behavior needs. It groups instruments into one of three tiers:

- Tier 1: Benchmarks all youth for behavior and/or social skills and identifies cases where social/emotional/behavior problems could interfere with learning.

- Tier 2: Identifies appropriate interventions that improve behavior and social skills, and monitors behavior progress.

- Tier 3: Monitors individuals with severe behavior or emotional problems more frequently or identify those needing to be referred to a behavioral specialist.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
		(age, reading level, etc.)	(purpose, testing time, formats, versions, languages, etc.)	NO No qualification required YES Qualifications required	F free $ $0-99 $$ $100-199 $$$ $200 & up
Adolescent Coping Scale - 2nd Edition (ACS-2)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 12-18 years	• assesses the usage and helpfulness of a range of general and specific coping strategies • 10-15 mins. testing time for Short Form • 20-30 mins. testing time for Long Form • several formats available: paper-based and web-based • 'Best of Coping' program available as follow-up intervention	YES	$$ - $$$
Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 13-80 years	• assesses occurrence and severity of depression symptoms • 5 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based, software-based, and web-based • available in Spanish	YES	$$
Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, Second Edition (BERS-2)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 5-18 years	• measures interpersonal strength, involvement with family, intrapersonal strength, school functioning, affective strength, and career strength • 10 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • youth, parent and teacher rating scales	YES	$$
Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 13 years and older • 6th grade reading level	• assesses clients for psychological problems • 8-10 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based, software-based, and web-based • 3 report options: interpretive, profile and progress reports • available in Spanish	YES	$$
Career Assessment Inventory - The Enhanced Version (CAI)	Vocation/Career Interests	• 15 years and older • 8th grade reading level	• assesses occupational interests for college-bound and non-college-bound individuals • 35-40 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based, software-based, and web-based • 111 careers represented • available in Spanish	YES	$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
Career Interests, Preferences, and Strengths Inventory (CIPSI)	Vocation/Career Interests	• 11-22 years • 3rd grade reading level	• aligns student responses with U.S. Dept. of Education's 16 career clusters • 15-30 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based	NO	F
Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)	Life Skills/ Independent Living	• 14-21 years • designed for use with youth engaged in systems of care • additional free assessments address special populations: • pregnant and parenting youth • education assessments for grades 4-12 and college • GLBTQ youth • American Indians • homeless youth • ages 8-13 with developmental and/or reading challenges	• assesses life skills youth need for their well-being, confidence and safety as they navigate high school, postsecondary education, employment, and other life milestones • 30-40 mins. testing time	NO	F
Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 5-19 years	• assesses a youth's day-to-day functioning and tracks changes in functioning over time • 10-15 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and web-based • available in Spanish	NO	$$-$$$
Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths-Mental Health (CANS-MH)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• children and adolescents with mental, emotional, or behavioral problems	• assesses type and severity of psychological and social factors that may impact treatment planning • 10 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • staff may be required to complete county- or state-provided CANS training program	YES	F
Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment (CAPA), Version 4.2	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 9-17 years	• assesses symptoms and potential areas of incapacity – family life and relationships, school life and relationships and spare time activities • 90 mins. testing time if interviewer has experience with assessment • paper-based; hand-scored • child and parent forms	YES	F
Child and Adolescent Risk Evaluation Assessment (CARE-2)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 6-19 years	• assesses children's strengths, problems, and stressors in an effort to predict their risk for future violent behavior • 15-30 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and web-based	Information not available	$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
Child Health Questionnaire (CHQ)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 5-18 years	• assesses children's general quality of life by measuring 14 physical and psychosocial aspects of overall health • 5-25 mins. testing time depending on test form (child or parent) and length (28, 50, or 87 questions) • child report form and parent report form • parent report form available in 2 lengths • available in multiple languages	Information not available	Information not available
Child/Youth Resiliency: Assessing Developmental Strengths (C/YR:ADS) Questionnaire	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• Information not available	• assesses and evaluates protective factors and strengths that are essential for navigating the critical developmental challenges and milestones in becoming healthy adults	NO	Information not available
Childhood Trauma Questionnaire: A Retrospective Self-Report (CTQ)	Trauma History and Symptoms	• 12 years and older	• screens adolescent and adult clients for histories of trauma, including child abuse and neglect • 5 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • useful with individuals with broad range of psychiatric symptoms including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, eating disorders, addictions, suicide attempts, personality disorders and sexual problems	YES	$$
Children's Depression Inventory 2 (CDI 2)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 7-17 years • 2nd grade reading level	• evaluates depressive symptoms in children and adolescents • 5-15 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based, software-based and web-based • 4 form versions: self-report, self-report (short), teacher, and parent • available in Spanish	YES	$-$$$
Children's Functional Assessment Rating Scale (CFARS) & Functional Assessment Rating Scale (FARS)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• children • adults	• assesses cognitive, social, and role functioning • administered by states and counties across U.S.	YES	F
Children's Inventory of Anger (ChIA)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 6-16 years • 3rd grade reading level	• identifies the kinds of situations that provoke anger in particular children as well as the intensity of their anger response • 10 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • available in Italian	YES	$-$$
Conflict Tactics Scales: Parent-Child Version (CTSPC)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 18 years and older	• identifies and quantifies the level of abuse in families, and in particular parent-to-child violence • 10 mins. testing time	YES	$$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 13 years and older	• assesses preferred coping style of individual and helps clinician understand the relationship between the client's coping style and personality, which assists treatment and intervention planning • 10 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • adolescent and adult forms	YES	$$$
Daniel Memorial Independent Living Skills Assessment (DMILSA) Version 10 (ILS26V10)	Life Skills/ Independent Living	• 14 years and older • youth engaged in systems of care	• assesses youths' independent living skills in 16 subject areas • 35-45 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • after assessment, software creates detailed skill plans and transition plans	NO	$-$$$
Drug Use Screening Inventory-Revised (DUSI-R)	Addiction and Substance Abuse	• 10 years and older • 5th grade reading level	• measures substance abuse and severity of problems in 10 areas of psychiatric/social function • 3-20 mins. testing time depending on test form (quick screen, short assessment, and full assessment) • several formats available: paper-based and web-based • youth and adult versions • available in 15 languages	Information not available	Information not available
Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (EQ-i:YV) & Emotional Quotient Inventory, Version 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 7-18 years (youth version) • adults (EQ-I 2.0)	• measures self-perception, self-expression, stress management, decisions making and interpersonal skills • testing time for youth version: 10 mins. (short version) or 30 mins. (full-length version) • several formats available: paper-based and web-based	YES	Information not available
Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 2-16 years • 6th grade reading level	• assesses the frequency and severity of disruptive behaviors in the home and school settings, as well as the extent to which parents and/or teachers find the behavior troublesome • 5 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • completed by parents • available in Spanish	YES	$-$$$
Family Environment Scale (FES)	Family Cohesion/Family Functioning	• 11 years and older • 6th grade reading level	• evaluates the social environment of the family unit • 15-20 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and web-based	NO	$$-$$$
Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener (GAIN-SS)	Addiction and Substance Abuse	• 10-17 years • adults	• screens for mental health and substance use disorders • 3-5 mins. testing time (longer for younger children) • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • available in Spanish	NO	$$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
KIDSCREEN	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 8-18 years	• quality of life assessment of children's and adolescents' perceptions of their own health and well-being • testing time varies on questionnaire version: • KIDSCREEN-52 (52 items): 15-20 mins. • KIDSCREEN-27 (27 items): 10-15 mins. • KIDSCREEN-10 Index (10 items): 5 mins. • child/adolescent and parent/guardian versions • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • available in 15+ languages	YES	F
Life Stressors and Social Resources Inventory - Youth (LISRES-Y)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 12-18 years	• measures ongoing life stressors and social resources and their changes over time • 30-60 mins. testing time • structured interview ideal for use with clients whose reading and comprehension skills are below a 6th-grade level	YES	$-$$$
Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 17 years and older	• evaluates ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotions; based on everyday scenarios, measures how well people perform tasks and solve emotional problems • 30-45 mins. testing time • several formats available: software-based and web-based	YES	$$$
Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 8-18 years	• measures depressive symptoms in children and young adults • 5-10 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • child- and parent-report forms • based on DSM-III-R criteria for depression	NO	F
Ohio Scales for Youth	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 5-18 years	• assesses the outcome of mental health services for youth • three forms: youth, parent, and agency worker • available in 5+ languages	NO	F (in Ohio) or $-$$$
Optum SF-12v2 Health Survey	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 18 years and older	• generic assessment of health-related quality of life from the client's point of view • 3-5 mins. testing time • several formats available; call publisher for details • available in 50+ languages	NO	Information not available
Pediatric Symptom Checklist-17 (PSC-17)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 4-18 years	• screens for childhood emotional and behavioral problems • 3 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • completed by parents • available in 15+ languages	NO	F

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
Personal Experience Inventory (PEI)	Addiction and Substance Abuse	• 12-18 years	• assesses all forms of substance abuse plus related psychosocial problems and personal risk factors • 45 mins. testing time • software-based	YES	$-$$$
Personal Experience Screening Questionnaire (PESQ)	Addiction and Substance Abuse	• 12-18 years	• screens for substance abuse and associated psychosocial problems • 10 mins. testing time • paper-based; automatically scored	YES	$-$$
Personality Inventory for Youth (PIY)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 9-19 years • 3rd grade reading level	• assesses emotional and behavioral adjustment, family interaction, and neuro-cognitive and attention-related academic functioning • 45 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • audiotape included for poor readers • available in Spanish	YES	$$-$$$
Picture Interest Career Survey, 2nd Edition (PICS)	Vocation/Career Interests	• 10-65 years	• assesses occupational interests • 10-15 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • good for non-readers, struggling readers, and non-English speakers	NO	$
Psychosocial Evaluation & Threat Risk Assessment (PETRA)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 11-18 years • 3rd grade reading level	• assesses threat risk for youth who exhibit threatening behavior • 10-15 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored	YES	$-$$
Resiliency Scales for Children & Adolescent - A Profile of Personal Strengths (RSCA)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 9-18 years • 3rd grade reading level	• assesses children's and adolescents' strengths and vulnerabilities • 5 mins. testing time per scale • 3 stand-alone scales: Sense of Mastery Scale, Sense of Relatedness Scale, Emotional Reactivity Scale • Response to Intervention (RTI)[2] Levels 1 and 2	YES	$$
Reynolds Adolescent Adjustment Screening Inventory (RAASI)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 12-19 years	• screens for adolescent adjustment problems • 5 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand scored	YES	$$
School-Age Assessments: Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Teacher's Report Form (TRF), and Youth Self-Report (YSR)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 6-18 years (CBCL & TRF) • 11-18 tears (YSR) • 5th grade reading level	• assesses children and adolescents for behavioral and emotional problems • available in several formats: paper-based, software-based, and web-based • available in several languages	YES	$$$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials

Self-Sufficiency Matrix	Life Skills/ Independent Living	• adults	• assesses an adult's current level of self-sufficiency
			• paper-based; hand-scored
			• 25 stand-alone scales
			  • any combination of scales can be used
			  • each scale on a continuum of 'in crisis' to 'thriving'
				Information not available	F

Short Employment Tests	Vocation/Career Interests	• for applicants for clerical positions • 5th grade reading level	• predicts performance in clerical jobs • 15 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored	NO	$$$
Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 3-18 years • 2nd grade reading level for student form • 5th grade reading level for parent form	• assesses social skills, academic competence, and problem behaviors that may affect the other two skill areas • 10-25 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • replaced the SSRS (Social Skills Rating System) • Response to Intervention (RTI)[2] Level 2 • available in Spanish	YES	$$$

Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI)
 	
Adolescent SASSI-A2
 	
Adult SASSI-3
	Addiction and Substance Abuse	• 12-18 years for SASSI-A2 (for youth living with caregiver/parent); 4th grade reading level
		• 18 years and older for Adult SASSI-3 (for youth living independently); 3rd grade reading level
			• identifies high or low probability of substance use disorders in clients
			  • for youth, provides clinical insight into family and social risk factors, level of defensive responding, and consequences of substance misuse teens endorsed
			  • for adults, provides clinical insight into level of defensiveness, willingness to acknowledge problems, and the desire for change
			• 15-20 mins. testing time
			• several formats available: paper-based, software-based, web-based, and Scantron
			• available in Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL)
				YES	$$-$$$

Symptom Assessment-45 Questionnaire (SA-45)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 13 years and older	• assesses wide range of mental health symptoms • 10 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based	YES	$$
Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) 9&10	Academic Skills	• adult students • grade level equivalents available – pre-literacy (grade 0) to Grade 12.9	• assesses how well a student may perform on a high school equivalency exam, i.e. GED • 15-25 mins. testing time per subject test; approx. 1.5 hrs for complete battery of tests • several formats available: paper-based, software-based, and web-based	NO	$$ - $$$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
The Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 10 years and older	• measures degree of resilience, predicts outcome to treatment with medication or psychotherapy, stress management and resilience-building; assesses progress during treatment; assesses biological (i.e. physical) changes in the brain • 5-10 mins. testing time • 3 versions: 25-item CD-RISC (CD-RISC 25), 10 item (CD-RISC 10) and two item (CD-RISC 2) • available in 50+ languages	Information not available	F
The Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale, 2nd edition (RADS-2)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 11-20 years	• identifies depressive symptoms in adolescents • 5-10 mins. testing time • paper-based; hand-scored • shorter version (RADS-2:SF) available	YES	$$
Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC)	Trauma History and Symptoms	• 8 to 16 years • 8-year-old reading level	• evaluates acute and chronic symptoms of posttraumatic stress and related psychological symptoms including the effects of child abuse (sexual, physical, and psychological) and neglect, other interpersonal violence, witnessing trauma to others, major accidents, and disasters • 15-20 mins. testing time • available in several formats: paper-based and software-based • alternate 44-item version, TSCC-A, makes no reference to sexual issues • available in Spanish	YES	$$-$$$
Trauma Symptom Inventory-2 (TSI-2)	Trauma History and Symptoms	• 18-88 years	• evaluates posttraumatic stress and other psychological symptoms resulting from traumatic events, including the effects of sexual and physical assault, intimate partner violence, combat, torture, motor vehicle accidents, mass casualty events, medical trauma, traumatic losses, and childhood abuse or neglect • 20 mins. testing time • several formats available: paper-based and software-based • available in Spanish	YES	$$$
Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Second Edition (Vineland-II)	Life Skills/ Independent Living	• birth-90 years • students, youth and adults who may have learning or developmental challenges • students at all levels of learning/behavior development	• measures personal and social skills needed for everyday living, and supports the diagnosis of intellectual and developmental disabilities • 20-60 mins. testing time for Survey Interview and Parent/Caregiver Rating Forms • 25-90 mins. testing time for Expanded Interview Form • 20 mins. testing time for Teacher Rating Form • available in several formats: paper-based and software-based • Response to Intervention (RTI)[2] Levels 2 and 3 • available in Spanish	YES	$$ - $$$

Measure	Subject	Population	Description	Qualifications required to access measure?	Cost of materials
Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT4)	Academic Skills	• 5-94 years • includes students who may have learning challenges	• assesses basic academic skills, and especially targets those referred for learning, behavioral, or vocational difficulties • 15-25 mins. testing time for ages 5-7; 35-45 mins. testing time for ages 8 and up • paper-based; hand-scored	YES	$$ - $$$
Young Adult Psychiatric Assessment (YAPA)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 18 years and older	• focuses on diagnoses, living situations, relationships, and areas of functioning relevant to young adulthood • 90-120 mins. testing time • modification of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment (CAPA) • paper-based; hand-scored	YES	F
Youth Outcome Questionnaire Self-Report, Version 2.0 (Y-OQ SR 2.0)	Mental Health and Overall Well-Being	• 4-17 years	• measures treatment progress for children and adolescents receiving mental health intervention; reflects total amount of distress a child or adolescent is experiencing • web-based • completed by parent/guardian • available in Spanish	Information not available	Information not available