

# Handout 1: A Brief Psychosocial Assessment for Adolescent Boys and Young Men

*(Adapted from the HEADSS Assessment)*

## **H** – Home

- Where do you live?
- Who else lives there?
- How do you get along with others in your home?
- Have there been any changes over the past year such as moves, deaths, births?

## **E** – Education, Employment

- Are you in school?
- Do you attend school regularly?
- How are you doing in school? What is your best subject?
- Have you had any problems at school?
- Do you ever have trouble paying attention in school or elsewhere?
- If you are working, what is your job? Do you enjoy/do well at your job?
- What work would you like to do in the future?

## **A** – Activities

- What do you do when you are not in school?
- What are your interests? Hobbies? Skills? Talents?
- Are you involved in sports or other activities?
- Who do you spend your free time with?
- What do you do with friends?

## **D** – Drugs/Alcohol *(see handout 2 – CRAFFT Screening Interview)*

- Do you ever drink alcohol? If so, how much and how often?
- Do you ever smoke marijuana? If so, how much and how often?
- Do you ever use any other drugs or prescription medications?
- Have you ever had a problem because of drugs or alcohol?

## **S – Sexuality**

- Are you interested in dating or currently dating anyone?
- Are you interested in girls, guys or both?
- Have you had sex with anyone? There are different kinds of sexual activity, oral, vaginal or anal? Which kinds have you had?
- Do you have any concerns?
- Have you ever had an unwanted sexual experience?

## **S – Suicide/Depression**

- Teenagers often have ups and downs in their mood. In general, how is your mood?
- Do you ever feel down or sad?
- Do you find that you often feel angry or irritable (grouchy, edgy)?
- Do you ever feel anxious or nervous? If so, describe how that feels.
- If you are having difficult feelings, do you know what causes them?
- Is there anything you do to help yourself feel better?
- Have you ever felt so bad that you wanted to end your life? If so, how often do you feel this way? Do you think you actually could try to kill yourself? If so, how would you do it?
- Have you ever tried to hurt or kill yourself in the past? If so, what did you do and when?
- Do you have access to weapons or ways to kill yourself?  
*(If there are suicidal feelings present, the patient must be assessed for acute risk.)*
- Do you feel safe at home? In your neighborhood? Have you been bullied?

The above questions inquire about areas of adolescent boys' lives in ways that encourage them to feel comfortable and safe. However, when following a HEADSS mnemonic, the order of the questions can be alienating for boys. They are more likely to establish a comfort level if the provider asks first about activities and interests. School or employment would be a good second area to inquire about. It is reassuring and inviting to ask initially about things adolescent boys enjoy and do well before progressing to potentially embarrassing or problematic areas.

Please note that when screening adolescent boys for depression, it is important to ask about anger and anxiety, as many boys experience depression through these other negative affective experiences. In addition, it is useful to ask about attention, as attention disorders can affect other areas such as school achievement, social interactions, and self-esteem.