

Appendix 3

What methods can be used to identify Psychosocial Yellow Flags?

There are two major methods that can be used:

- › Structured questionnaire
- › Clinical assessment.

A combination of both can also be used. The method chosen will depend on the clinical setting, and the treatment provider's personal confidence at assessing these issues.

The advantages and disadvantages of the various methods are listed on the next page. Become familiar with these in order to be able to counteract any disadvantages for the method chosen.

TABLE 3: ADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

- › Quick to administer
- › Useful for screening large numbers
- › Little skill needed
- › Interpretation is usually unequivocal
- › Can be statistically based on evidence

DISADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

- › Require time to score, need to check for missing information
- › Unsuitable for those with reading problems
- › May not be applicable to all members of a community, eg, new immigrants
- › May only predict one goal, eg, work loss but not pain
- › May be too sensitive to time of measurement
- › Susceptible to confounding factors, such as social desirability, or 'impression management' such as the person telling you what they think you want to hear

ADVANTAGES OF CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

- › Clinician can adapt readily to characteristics of the individual
- › Incorporates clinical experience
- › Facilitates establishing potential goals for intervention
- › Less susceptible to confounding factors, such as social desirability or 'impression management'
- › Judgements about severity can be made

DISADVANTAGES OF CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

- › Potentially time consuming
- › May result in confused picture unless clinical skill level is adequate
- › Possibility of observer bias or prejudice

ADVANTAGES OF COMBINATIONS OF QUESTIONNAIRES WITH CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

- › Improved accuracy
- › Clinician can integrate quantitative information with clinical data
- › Can use two stage process with questionnaire as first stage filter to target clinical assessments

DISADVANTAGES OF COMBINATIONS OF QUESTIONNAIRES WITH CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

- › Require more resources, including the need for adequate organisation and training
- › More time needed, potential for delays