

# Structural Vulnerability Checklist

From: Bourgois P, Holmes SM, Sue K, Quesada J. “Structural Vulnerability: Operationalizing the Concept to Address Health Disparities in Clinical Care.” *Academic Medicine*, 2017.

Chart 1

## Structural Vulnerability Assessment Tool<sup>a</sup>

Domain	Screening questions and assessment probes <sup>b</sup>
Financial security	<p><b>Do you have enough money to live comfortably—pay rent, get food, pay utilities/telephone?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you make money? Do you have a hard time doing this work?</li> <li>• Do you run out of money at the end of the month/week?</li> <li>• Do you receive any forms of government assistance?</li> <li>• Are there other ways you make money?</li> <li>• Do you depend on anyone else for income?</li> <li>• Have you ever been unable to pay for medical care or for medicines at the pharmacy?</li> </ul>
Residence	<p><b>Do you have a safe, stable place to sleep and store your possessions?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you lived/stayed there?</li> <li>• Is the place where you live/stay clean/private/quiet/protected by a lease?</li> </ul>
Risk environments	<p><b>Do the places where you spend your time each day feel safe and healthy?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you worried about being injured while working/trying to earn money?</li> <li>• Are you exposed to any toxins or chemicals in your day-to-day environment?</li> <li>• Are you exposed to violence? Are you exposed regularly to drug use and criminal activity?</li> <li>• Are you scared to walk around your neighborhood at night/day?</li> <li>• Have you been attacked/mugged/beaten/chased?</li> </ul>
Food access	<p><b>Do you have adequate nutrition and access to healthy food?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you eat on most days?</li> <li>• What did you eat yesterday?</li> <li>• What are your favorite foods?</li> <li>• Do you have cooking facilities?</li> </ul>
Social network	<p><b>Do you have friends, family, or other people who help you when you need it?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the members of your social network, family and friends? Do you feel this network is helpful or unhelpful to you? In what ways?</li> <li>• Is anyone trying to hurt you?</li> <li>• Do you have a primary care provider/other health professionals?</li> </ul>
Legal status	<p><b>Do you have any legal problems?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you scared of getting in trouble because of your legal status?</li> <li>• Are you scared the police might find you?</li> <li>• Are you eligible for public services? Do you need help accessing these services?</li> <li>• Have you ever been arrested and/or incarcerated?</li> </ul>
Education	<p><b>Can you read?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what language(s)? What level of education have you reached?</li> <li>• Do you understand the documents and papers you must read and submit to obtain the services and resources you need?</li> </ul>
Discrimination	<p><b>[Ask the patient] Have you experienced discrimination?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you experienced discrimination based on your skin color, your accent, or where you are from?</li> <li>• Have you experienced discrimination based on your gender or sexual orientation?</li> <li>• Have you experienced discrimination for any other reason?</li> </ul> <p><b>[Ask yourself silently] May some service providers (including me) find it difficult to work with this patient?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could the interactional style of this patient alienate some service providers, eliciting potential stigma, stereotypical biases, or negative moral judgments?</li> <li>• Could aspects of this patient’s appearance, ethnicity, accent, etiquette, addiction status, personality, or behaviors cause some service providers to think this patient does not deserve/want or care about receiving top quality care?</li> <li>• Is this patient likely to elicit distrust because of his/her behavior or appearance?</li> <li>• May some service providers assume this patient deserves his/her plight in life because of his/her lifestyle or aspects of appearance?</li> </ul>