**Affidavit Note Taking Companion**

**Before beginning session**

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| Introduction:* Today we will focus on writing your personal story. We know this isn’t the first or last time you will tell your story. We want to listen to your story in order to give you the best advice possible. There is no perfect asylum case. You know your story better than anyone. We want to be sure we understand it completely.
* Are there questions you have for your attorney that I could help get answered?
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| Process:* Review confidentiality & communication with attorney
* Explain what an affidavit is and its purpose in the case.
* Comparisons between CFI / I-589 / Affidavit / Testimony
* You and the attorney will work together to decide what should be included in the final version.
* There may be times that I will have to interrupt you to ask questions or take breaks.
* Review timeline & client’s ability to decide pace within this timeline
* Do you have any questions about the process?
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| Judgement:* We are not here to judge you. We do not work for the government. We just want to help prepare you for your case, so we must ask questions to better understand.
* Any reaction/feeling you have during this process is valid.

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| Discuss safetyDo you feel safe in this office? If not, is there anything I could do to make you feel safer?You can pause or stop any session at any time. | Screening for therapyPrevious therapist: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Current therapist: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Interested in referral: Yes / No** |

**Tools for writer during session**

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| Grounding exercises with client [ ] Breathing exercise [ ] Take break for water/tea[ ] Change subject[ ] Explain process is difficult for most clients[ ] If client drifts off talk about something in the present and in the room to help bring the client back.  | Responses - You can always say:I’m not judging you.I believe you.This is difficult.You are doing really well.  |

**Closing a session**

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| * **Would you like a copy of our final affidavit in your native language? Yes / No**
* Warn about potential nightmares/symptoms from talking about trauma. Revisit therapy options.
* End with a grounding exercise.
* Small talk, plans for the rest of the day.
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| **Before first session review:**\_\_\_\_ Intake\_\_\_\_ I-589\_\_\_\_ CFI\_\_\_\_ Attorney Notes  | **Timeline**: Due Date: \_\_\_\_First session: \_\_\_\_Second session: \_\_\_\_Debrief with attorney: \_\_\_\_Third session: \_\_\_\_Reading: \_\_\_\_ |

**Writer Reflections, Pending Items, Concerns, Questions for Attorney**

**Timeline**

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| **Life in home country*** Where were you born?
* Where were you living when you left?
* Who did you live with?
* What did you do? (work/daily life/school)
* What other things did you do regularly?
* Religion? Did you attend a church?
* Education –how old were you when you started and stopped school?
* **What happened in your country and why can’t you go back?**
 | **Life in home country & Open Narrative****Open Narrative Continued**  |
| **DV*** Nature of relationship
* How did you meet/how did the relationship form?
* How did your relationship differ/compare to the relationships of people in your family/community?
* When did you realize your relationship was different?
* Why did abuser target you? / what circumstances led to them targeting you? / how did the threats begin?
* Did anyone else know? Did you ever tell anyone? What did they say?

**Gangs*** Was it more dangerous for *you*? Why do you think that?
	+ Why do gangs target women who live alone?
	+ Is it more dangerous for kids who don’t live with their parents?
* Escalation of harm/threats:
	+ What happened after you refused?
	+ Did things get worse?
* Quote exactly what was said.
 | **Nexus** |
| **DV- Physical harm*** How often/how many times?
* First, worst, last
* Can you walk me through the day that this happened?
* What were you hit with? Where on your body?
* Some people take pictures of their wounds or scars in order to have proof, did you take any photos?
* Did you go to the doctor? What kept you from going? What do people think of women/men when they ask for help?
* Trauma to the head? Loss of consciousness?
* Did they apply pressure to or around your neck? If so, how did it end? When did they stop? What words did you say to them while it was happening? Did you lose time? Did you have to change your clothes?

**Psychological harm** **(Then and Now)*** Trouble: sleeping, concentrating, remembering, loss of appetite?
* Did you have scary or reoccurring thoughts, or panic attacks, anxiety, or depression?
* Difficulty trusting men, beginning new relationships?
* Has it affected your parenting, sexual desire, and/or self-esteem?

**Sexual abuse*** Did your abuser ever make you have sex, or touch you in a sexual way when you didn’t want to be touched?
* Can you tell me what happened? (need to know how they were forced –physically, threats, insults, made to feel obligated)
* Did he ever try to humiliate you during sexual abuse? (language, cutting, forcing oral/anal sex, restraints)
* History of STIs, pain during sex?

**Pregnancy** * Hurt while pregnant?
* Did abuse cause a miscarriage?
* Access to prenatal care?
* Issues with birth? Health of baby?
* Did you have access to birth control when you wanted it? Did he control access? What was his opinion?

 | **Past Persecution/Harm** |
| **Gangs*** Can you walk me through the day you were threatened/hurt?
* What was the exact threat?
* Which gang?
* Did they have guns/weapons when they threated you? Where were the weapons when they threatened you?
* Do you have family members who have been threatened by the gangs? How? when?
 | **Past Persecution/Harm continued** |
| Feminism*: First explain to client your understanding of feminism and DV as it relates to nexus. Define social terms used, find moments and words of resistance.* **Client/abuser views of gender roles?*** How do you see the role of a husband and wife? How did he? What did your husband expect of you?
* What does your/his religion say about gender roles?
* What are the things you wanted to do but could not?
	+ School, church, work? Client and abuser’s views on women doing these things
* **Insults**: Did he insult you? What did he say? What did these words and accusations mean to you as a woman? What do they show about his view of women?

**Economic freedom of women*** Did your partner handle all of the money? Did he give you money? Did he take the money you earned? What did he say to justify taking your money?
* Childcare: Who made decisions about raising children? When to have children? Daughters in school? Abortion?

**Access to information/expression*** How did abuser react to you insisting on knowing things about him, i.e. where he was going and what he was doing, who he’s spending his time with? If she did not insist on knowing, why? Did her questions about these things directly lead to any abuse?

\*Adapted from Center for Gender and Refugee Studies and Tahirih Justice Center**Sex:** Resistance to abuser’s advances? Your opinion on ability of women to choose not to have sex with their partner/husband? Your abuser’s opinion on obligation of wife/partner to have sex?* Expressions or assertion of her rights or her beliefs in gender equality or equality in relationship or her role in the relationship? How did you find the strength to say no?
* Escalation of violence after a specific act?
* How did you find the strength to leave?
* Were there times before when you wanted to leave but couldn’t? What were the reasons behind that decision?
* Did you ever ask for help leaving? Did anyone refuse to help you? Why?
* Did you have access to birth control when you wanted it? Did he control access? What was his opinion?

**Affiliation with a specific party?** Example: political conflict in Honduras is Liberal party vs. national party\*Adapted from Center for Gender and Refugee Studies and Tahirih Justice Center**Anti-gang PO*** What is the situation in your country with gangs? How do they control life in your community? How do other community members feel about being controlled in this way? Do you agree?
* What are the things that you wanted to do but could not because of the gangs? (school, church, work?)
* What do police do about gangs when they commit crimes? What should they do?
* Would you want your children to be gang members or have relationships with gang members? Why not? – for kids – Do you want to be gang members? Why/why not?
* What are your religious beliefs? Would they allow you to be in a gang?
* What do you want to do with your future? How are gangs preventing it?
* What if your daughter decided to date a gang member? What opinions would you have, or what would you do? --**> If courted or pursued by gang member, address Feminist questions in context of gangs. Describe any similarly situated families/girls/women in the community.**
* What do you think will happen if you return to your country?
* Why do you think that?
* Has persecutor had contact with you, family members, or people who know you since you left?
	+ When/how often?
	+ Did they ask about you?
	+ What did your family members say?
* Would you continue doing (whatever made persecutor angry) if you went back?
* Did your abuser hurt another person as well? Abuser’s past or current partners
* Were your friends or people in your community that you know also threatened or hurt by your abuser/the gang?
* What has happened to other individuals who were in your position when you left?
 | **Political Opinions****Fear of Future Persecution** |
| **Personal experiences*** Did you ever report to the police? Quote what police said when you reported/tried to report crime.
* Why not? Was there something that stopped you? How did you decide?
* If you did, did they find out? escalation of violence/threats after?

**Experiences of others*** Other women/people who tried to seek police protection and had bad experiences or escalation of violence afterwards? This can be family members, friends, acquaintances, other people in your community.
* What happened to the person who reported the crime?
* What happened to their abuser?

**General info about police*** How close is the nearest police station?
* Do police patrol the area where you live/work?
* Do you know any police officers?
* Did you partner know any police officers/people in the government?
* Have you ever seen any interactions between the police and gang members/abuser?
* Role of policing in indigenous communities
 | **Police** |
| **Leaving abusive/dangerous situation****Social/familial support*** What family members and close family friends do you have in home country? Where are they and why can you not live with them?
* How able was your support group to help you? How much power did they have to help keep you safe?
* Is there a safe place you could go in your country?
* Did you try to move? What happened?
* Do you know of other people that have relocated successfully?
* Does your abuser have the ability to find you?
* Does your abuser have connections to other parts of your country?
* Does abuser know other family/did he ever visit your family out of town?

**Work*** If transferable skill/profession, why couldn’t you practice in another part of the country?
 | **Relocation** |
| **Familial Abuse*** Who did you live with growing up?
* How did they treat you?
* Did anyone ever hurt you?

**Color*** Do you look like other people in your community? What are nicknames that you are called? Are there ways in which you stand out?

**LGBT*** Have you ever felt judged because of who your partner was?
* Are there differences in how you act, dress, speak and how men and women are expected to in your community?

**Indigenous identity*** Is partner/gang members indigenous? (mixed indigenous relationship)
* Did he ever say anything about you or your family being from indigenous community?
* Role of policing in indigenous communities?
* Discrimination against indigenous women/people?
 | **Other Possible Claims** |
| * How has your life improved in the United States?
* What did a normal day look like in home country vs here?
* How have you been better able to express yourself?
* What are you able to do in this country that you were prevented from doing in your home country?
* In what ways do you feel safe in the United States? – tie to future persecution.

**Children*** Client’s views on raising children away from harm?
* Away from abusive partner/not learning to be like father/outside of machista society?
* Away from lawless or gang-controlled society?
* How do you think your daughter/son living away from that society influence the person they will be come?
 | **Life in the U.S. – Tie to nexus** |