

Risk Screening Tool & Risk-Needs Assessment Implementation Checklists

Research has found that with some youths, any exposure to the juvenile justice system (e.g. community service or probation) can actually increase their chances of offending again.¹ It has also been found that the severity of the first offense is not a significant indicator of future patterns of offending,² and that the majority of low-risk youth are unlikely to reoffend even with little to no intervention.³ It follows that there would be benefit to juveniles, probation departments, and juvenile justice agencies to sort juvenile offenders by risk, to divert low risk offenders away from the juvenile justice system as often as possible, and to focus on services to high risk offenders.⁴

Validated and comprehensive risk assessment tools can assess a youth's likelihood to reoffend and suggest a proper level of intervention specifically tailored for that individual. A validated risk assessment can *guide intervention planning* by determining what areas of the youth's life can be changed in order to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. In addition, risk assessment can offer *a standardized method of important data collection to plan resource allocation and chart the overall progress of the youths.*⁵

Adoption of a risk assessment tool is unlikely to make much difference in the handling of young offenders unless it is paired with a case management approach that guides how the risk assessment should be used in case processing.⁶ Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) is a case management approach that, if implemented well, can lead to better outcomes for

individuals involved in the justice system.⁷ The RNR approach suggests that any formal processing and case management of youth should be commensurate with a youth's level of risk for reoffending and should address the youth's specific dynamic risk factors.

Implementing risk screening or assessment with RNR principles can conserve resources for probation departments and juvenile justice systems and improve outcomes for youth while still protecting public safety. However, the impact of these tools will ultimately be based on how well it is implemented and a site's individual characteristics.⁸ Quality implementation, quality assurance, and buy-in from stakeholders are all crucial to successfully implement risk tools and principles in juvenile systems.

The following Checklists have been developed by the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice in collaboration with Gina Vincent, Ph.D., of the National Youth Screening and Assessment Partners, LLC. They have been developed to assist probation departments and juvenile justice agencies in their review and evaluation of the quality of their implementation practices and quality assurance methods and mechanisms in relation to their risk assessment and RNR tools. Used internally or through external facilitation during the Probation System Review, the completion of these Checklists provide an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses, and align the use of their adopted tools with standards of best practice.

1 Gatti, U., Tremblay, R. E., & Vitaro, F. (2009). Iatrogenic effect of juvenile justice. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 50(8), 991-998.

2 Mulvey, E. P., Steinberg, L., Piquero, A. R., Besana, M., Fagan, J., Schubert, C. et al. (2010). Trajectories of desistance and continuity in antisocial behavior following court adjudication among serious adolescent offender. *Development and Psychopathology*, 22(2), 453-475.

3 Lipsey, M. W. (2009). The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta-analytic overview. *Victims & Offenders*, 4(2), 124-147.

4 Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., Grisso, T. (2012). *Risk Assessment in Juvenile Justice: A Guidebook for Implementation*. Chicago, IL: John D. & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation. www.NYSAP.us

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). Rehabilitating criminal justice policy and practice, *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 16(1), 39-55.

8 Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., Gershenson, B. G., & McCabe, P. (2012a). Does risk assessment make a difference? Results of implementing the SAVRY in juvenile probation. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 30(4), 487-505.

Risk Screening Tool Implementation Checklist

<p>1. What decision will the risk screening tool be used to inform?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversion/alternative response <input type="checkbox"/> Filing / Petition <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>2. Who will administer the risk screening tool?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor's Office <input type="checkbox"/> Intake Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>3. What is the timeframe for staff to complete the tool?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Within 24 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 48 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 72 hours of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 5 business days of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Within 1 week of referral <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>4. In what form are the results compiled?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand-written <input type="checkbox"/> Computerized <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>5. Where are the results maintained?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy in case file <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic database (name: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>6. Who receives the risk level results of the screening tool?</p> <p>Please note after each relevant entity the form in which they receive the results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary sheet • Full report • Verbal summary • Other 	<input type="checkbox"/> Prosecutor: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Defense Counsel: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Probation Department: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Judge: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Court Clerk: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion Coordinator / Board: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Youth: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>7. Have the staff persons that will be administering the screening tool received training from a qualified trainer?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>8. Have the entities that will use the results of the screening tool been trained on how the tool is administered and how the results will be used?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> To be completed by: _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>9. How often is staff provided or required to complete "booster" training?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> Every 24 months <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>10. Who will be responsible for managing the quality assurance of the administration and use of the tool?</p>	Name: _____ Title: _____ Agency: _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>11. Has a protocol for the administration and use of the tool been developed?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>12. Is there a protocol for regular data reporting about the risk levels of youth and the outcomes of their case (e.g., disposition, diversion)?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No To be completed by: _____	<p>Comments:</p>

Risk-Needs Assessment Tool Implementation Checklist

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE CHECKLIST FOR EACH SEPARATE KEY DECISION POINT AT WHICH THE ASSESSMENT IS ADMINISTERED

- Pre-filing
- Pre-adjudication
- Pre-disposition
- Other _____

Comments:

1. Which categories of youth will receive the assessment?

- All youth
- Youth who screened in with a validated risk screening tool
- Sexual Offenders
- Other _____

Comments:

2. What decision(s) will the risk-needs assessment be used to inform?

- Filing
- Identification of pre-trial services
- Probation case plan
- Category of supervision
- Judge's dispositional order
- Other _____

Comments:

3. Who will administer the risk-needs assessment?

- Intake Officer
- Probation Officer
- Other _____

Comments:

4. What is the timeframe for staff to complete the tool following preliminary/adjudication?

- 7 days
- 14 days
- 21 days
- Other _____

Comments:

5. In what form are the results compiled?

- Hand-written report
- Computerized report
- Other _____

Comments:

6. Where are the results maintained?

- Hard copy in case file
- Electronic database: _____
- Other _____

Comments:

7. Who receives the results of the risk-needs assessment?

Please note after each relevant entity the form in which they receive the results.

- Summary sheet
- Full report
- Verbal summary
- Other

- Prosecutor: _____
- Defense Counsel: _____
- Probation Department: _____
- Judge: _____
- Court Clerk: _____
- Youth: _____
- Parent / Guardian: _____
- Other _____

Comments:

8. Have the staff persons who will be administering the assessment received training from a qualified trainer?

- Yes
- No
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

9. Are coaches or 'master trainers' available for staff to rely on if they have assessment questions?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

10. How often is staff provided or required to complete "booster" training?

- Every 12 months
- Every 24 months
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

11. Have entities that will see/use the results of the assessment (e.g., judges) been trained on how it is administered and how the results can and will be used?

- Yes
- No
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

12. Is there a policy or protocol in place for case plans to be checked by a supervisor to ensure these are in alignment with need areas and strengths?

- Yes
- No
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

13. Has a protocol or policy for the administration and use of the tool been developed?

- Yes
- No
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

14. Has a data reporting system been developed so routine data reports are shared within the agency? What aggregate reports will be developed?

- Yes
- No
- To be completed by: _____

Comments:

Risk Screening Tool & Risk-Needs Assessment Quality Assurance Checklists

Risk Screening Tool Quality Assurance Checklist		
<p>1. Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>2. Is the tool being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>3. Are the results of the tool being shared with the relevant entity(ies) as defined in protocol or information sharing agreements?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>4. Are staff compiling the information into the approved format and sharing it with the relevant entity(ies) in a prescribed timeframe?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>5. What percentage of the time do low risk youth referrals receive the following alternative responses?</p>	<p>% Dismissal _____ % Diversion _____ % Informally processing _____ % No filing _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>6. Is the risk tool being input into the electronic database in a timely manner?</p> <p>What percentage of the time?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Percentage _____</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Risk-Needs Assessment Quality Assurance Checklist

1.	Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
2.	Is the assessment being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
3.	Are the results of the tool being shared with the relevant entity(ies) as defined in protocol or information sharing agreements? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
4.	Are staff compiling the information into the approved format and sharing it with the relevant entity(ies) in a timely fashion? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
5.	Are youth receiving the appropriate level of supervision given their overall risk rating?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
6.	Are the results being used to create individualized case plans based on risk level and unique needs and strengths? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
7.	Are staff making appropriate service recommendations at disposition OR appropriate service referrals according to the service matrix (whichever is applicable)? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
8.	Is the tool being completed to reassess the youth's changing risks and needs as prescribed by policy? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
9.	Do the case plans reflect updated scores from the prescribed reassessment? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
10.	Is there evidence in the files that the reassessment results are being used to enhance decision making and case management? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
11.	Do probation sanctions and rewards reflect the youth's risk level as determined through the assessment of needs and strengths? (if applicable) What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
12.	Are assessments being reviewed and approved by a supervisor? What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
13.	Are case plans (if applicable) being reviewed and approved by a supervisor to ensure they are in alignment with the youth's risk factors and strengths What percentage of the time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Percentage _____	Comments:
14.	Are assessments being input into the electronic database in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments: