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

1.	What decision will the risk screening tool be used to inform?	☐ Diversion/alternative response ☐ Filing / Petition ☐ Other _____	Comments:
2.	Who will administer the risk screening tool?	☐ Prosecutor's Office ☐ Intake Officer ☐ Other _____	Comments:
3.	What is the timeframe for staff to complete the tool?	☐ Within 24 hours of referral ☐ Within 48 hours of referral ☐ Within 72 hours of referral ☐ Within 5 business days of referral ☐ Within 1 week of referral ☐ Other _____	Comments:
4.	In what form are the results compiled?	☐ Hand-written ☐ Computerized ☐ Other _____	Comments:
5.	Where are the results maintained?	☐ Hard copy in case file ☐ Electronic database (name: _____) ☐ Other _____	Comments:
6.	Who receives the risk level results of the screening tool? 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: _____ ☐ Diversion Coordinator / Board: _____ ☐ Youth: _____ ☐ Parent / Guardian: _____ ☐ Other _____	Comments:
7.	Have the staff persons that will be administering the screening tool received training from a qualified trainer?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ To be completed by: _____	Comments
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?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ To be completed by: _____	Comments:
9.	How often is staff provided or required to complete "booster" training?	☐ Every 12 months ☐ Every 24 months ☐ Other _____	Comments:
10.	Who will be responsible for managing the quality assurance of the administration and use of the tool?	Name: _____ Title:_____ Agency: _____	Comments:
11.	Has a protocol for the administration and use of the tool been developed?	☐ Yes ☐ No To be completed by: _____	Comments:
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)?	☐ Yes ☐ No To be completed by: _____	Comments:

Risk-Needs Assessment Tool Implementation Checklist

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE CHECKLIST FOR EACH SEPARATE KEY DECISION POINT AT WHICH THE ASSESMENT 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		
1. Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
2. Is the tool being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
4. Are staff compiling the information into the approved format and sharing it with the relevant entity(ies) in a prescribed timeframe? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
5. What percentage of the time do low risk youth referrals receive the following alternative responses?	% Dismissal _____ % Diversion _____ % Informally processing _____ % No filing _____	Comments:
6. Is the risk tool being input into the electronic database in a timely manner? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:

Risk-Needs Assessment Quality Assurance Checklist

1.	Is the tool being completed for every eligible youth? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
2.	Is the assessment being completed in a timely manner as defined in protocols? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
5.	Are youth receiving the appropriate level of supervision given their overall risk rating? 	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
9.	Do the case plans reflect updated scores from the prescribed reassessment? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
11.	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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
12.	Are assessments being reviewed and approved by a supervisor? What percentage of the time?	☐ Yes ☐ 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?	☐ Yes ☐ No Percentage _____	Comments:
14.	Are assessments being input into the electronic database in a timely manner?	☐ Yes ☐ No	Comments: