

Center for Court Innovation: Digest of Evidence-based Assessment Tools

Comprehensive Risk Needs Tools ¹					
Name (hyperlink to additional information)	Statistically Validated to Predict Recidivism?	Proprietary?	Pros	Cons	Screening Version Available?
The Level of Services Inventory- Revised	Yes	Yes	Oldest of the comprehensive tools (most often validated); is open-ended and allows for interviewer discretion in rating risk; can be incorporated into existing data tracking systems or a the LSI standard system can be purchased	Requires in-depth clinical training; may take longer to administer than close ended tools; requires that the user pay per completed assessment	Yes
The Level of Services Inventory- Case Management Inventory	Yes	Yes	Oldest of the comprehensive tools (most often validated); is open-ended and allows for interviewer discretion in rating risk; contains an administrative/ case management component; can be incorporated into existing data tracking systems or a the LSI standard system can be purchased	Requires in-depth clinical training; may take longer to administer than close-ended tools; requires that the user pay per completed assessment	Yes
The COMPAS	Yes	Yes	Close-ended questions only and does not require clinical knowledge or extensive training; Quicker to administer than some open-ended tools; Comes in a web-based, self-scoring format	Close-ended questions mean less discretion on part of the interviewer to assess risk; Less clinically focused than some other comprehensive tools; may need to be supplemented with clinical tools; scoring system is proprietary	Unknown
The Ohio Risk Assessment System	Yes	No	Only comprehensive system in the public domain; Contains tools specifically for different stages of processing (pre-trial; prison intake; community supervision; reentry)	Requires some clinical training at a cost; may take longer to administer than close-ended tools	Yes
The RANT (Risk and Need Triage)	Yes	Yes	Specific to drug-involved populations; Allows for a simple treatment matching based on four categories (high risk/low need; low risk/high need; high risk/high need; low risk/low need	Validation literature is new compared to other tools; relatively expensive; may not include all eight criminogenic needs; scoring system is proprietary	Unknown
Short RNR Screeners					
The Criminal Court Assessment Tool	Yes	No	Brief and efficient for early case processing or overloaded dockets; Pubic Domain; Provides a raw score and risk category	Provides needs "flags" but no in-depth information about treatment needs; still in early validation	N/A
Static Screeners					
The Arnold Public Safety Assessment	Yes	No	Also predicts failure to appear and violent offending; static (does not require a defendant interview; just relies on demographic and criminal history information); can be completed in a short period of time - ideal for pretrial environment; training is required, but no clinical expertise needed	Requires collaboration and working directly with tool developer; provides no information on risk reduction or criminogenic needs	N/A
Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument	Yes	No	Static (does not require a defendant interview; just relies on demographic and criminal history information); can be completed in a short period of time - ideal for pretrial environment; training is required, but no clinical expertise needed	Requires collaboration and working directly with tool developer; provides no information on risk reduction or criminogenic needs	N/A
Short Addiction Screeners					
Texas Christian University Drug Screen (TCUDS)	Yes	No	Based on DSM-IV criteria <i>and</i> validated to predict recidivism; In the public domain; easy to score and integrate in to existing data systems		N/A
Addiction Severity Index2	Unknown	No	Covers addiction and related psychosocial factors; has been used extensively in correctional and other settings	Lengthy, but not a focused addiction screener or a comprehensive risk-need-responsivity tool	N/A
GAIN Short Screener (GAIN-SS)2	No	Yes	Very efficient combined short screener for addiction and mental illness (including internalizing and externalizing disorders)	Requires training at cost and is proprietary; Not originally designed for justice-system involved populations	N/A
Mental Health					
GAIN Short Screener (GAIN-SS)2	No	Yes	Very efficient combined short screener for addiction and mental illness (including internalizing and externalizing disorders)	Requires training at cost and is proprietary; Not originally designed for justice-system involved populations	N/A
Brief Mental Health Jail Screen2	No		Public domain, no training required, easy to score; Looks at current active symptoms that may be related to justice system involvement	Not as accurate for female detainees than for male	N/A
Trauma Screeners					
Texas Christian University Trauma Form	No	No	Covers the primary trauma symptoms without asking about specific traumatic experiences; Is close-ended and could be used without clinical training; Public domain	Not necessarily valid as a predictor of PTSD diagnosis	N/A

Trauma Symptom Checklist2	No	No		Not explicitly for justice system populations	N/A
Criminal Thinking Scales					
Texas Christian University CTS	No	No	Only separate criminal thinking scale that is not part of a separate comprehensive screener; public domain; easy to score	Statistically valid for predicting progress in treatment but not criminal recidivism	N/A

¹ Covers the eight criminogenic domains: Criminal History, Criminal Thinking, Antisocial Behavior, Antisocial Peers, Education/Employment, Family/Marital, Social Isolation, Substance Abuse

²Validated to accurately predict clinical diagnosis but not risk of recidivism