Ensuring Program Excellence: Risk Needs Assessment in RSAT Programs

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)
Program for State Prisoners

Training and Technical Assistance Resource

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Today's Speakers

Lisa Lundrigan, M.A.
Senior Criminal Justice Associate
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.
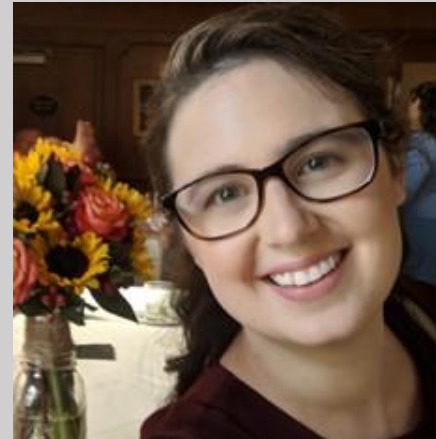
Samatha Kossow, MPP
Research Associate
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Explain the concept of risk and needs in the context of correctional treatment.

- Identify three reasons why assessment is important to ensuring successful treatment delivery.

- Identify a validated risk needs assessment tool appropriate for specific program needs.

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Screening vs. Assessment

Screening

Brief; used with every person entering a facility in an intake setting

Identifies individuals who might have a specific need (e.g., mental health or substance use disorder)

Helps "triage" individuals for immediate attention for an assessment

Often requires little to no training to administer – can be completed by non-clinical staff, including security

Assessment

Longer and more comprehensive; results give a multi-dimensional perspective of the person

Help to develop specific recommendations for treatment and case planning

Identifies needs that may require specialized services

Often requires training to administer and interpret the results – completed by clinical staff

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Why is assessment important for RSAT programs?
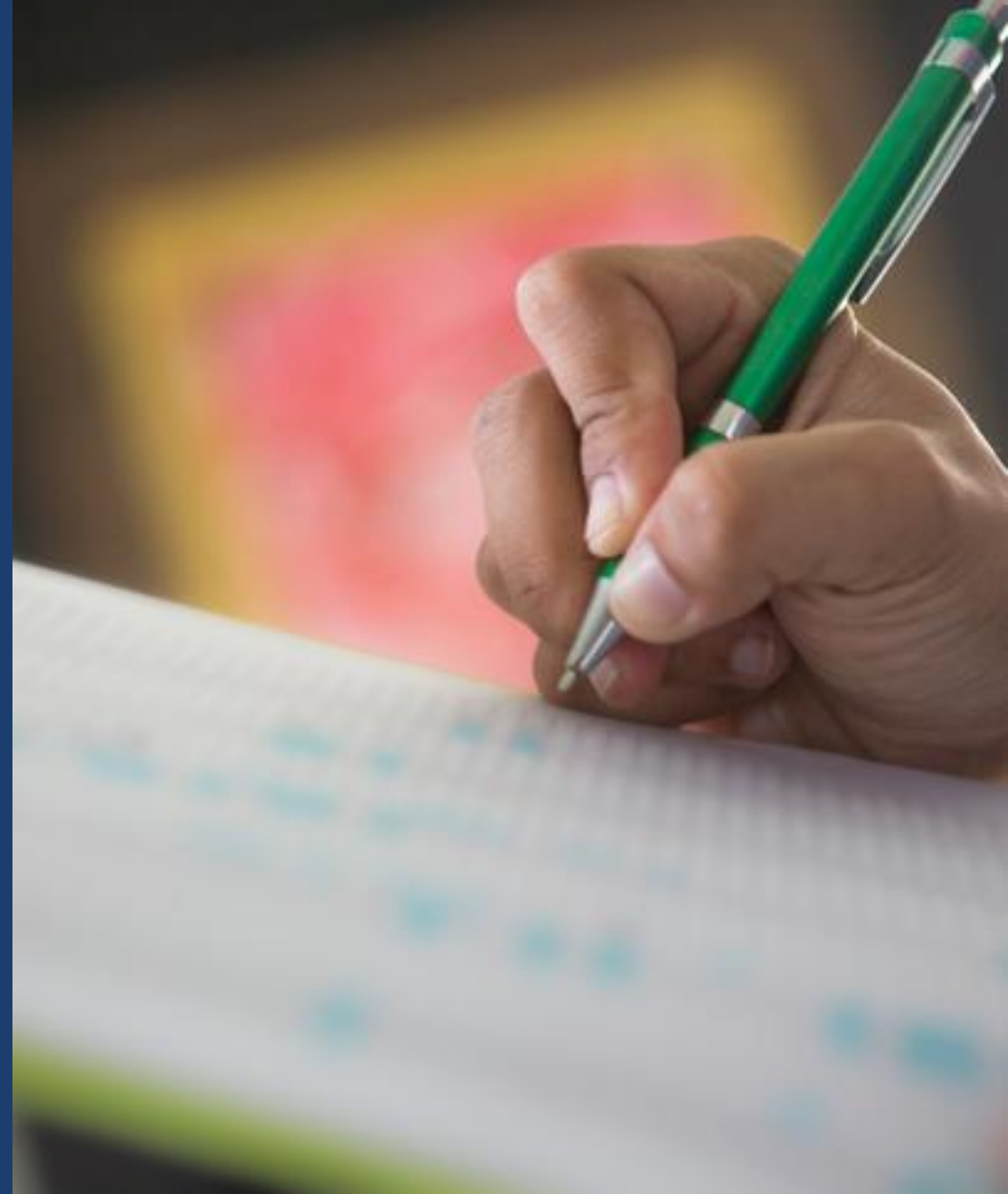
"Residential SUD Treatment programs should have clear eligibility criteria, primarily based on substance use and co-occurring mental health disorder screening and assessments and criminogenic risk assessments."

Promising Practices Guidelines for
Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment, 2023

Risk Assessment Components

1. Risk
2. Need
3. Responsivity

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1. Risk

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What is Risk?

In general, "risk" refers to the likelihood of an adverse outcome

- **Likelihood** is determined by statistical (or actuarial) procedures
- Risk assessment links causal factors to future outcomes
  - Causal factor → future outcome
  - History of failing classes → likelihood of high school dropout
  - Smoking → likelihood of lung cancer
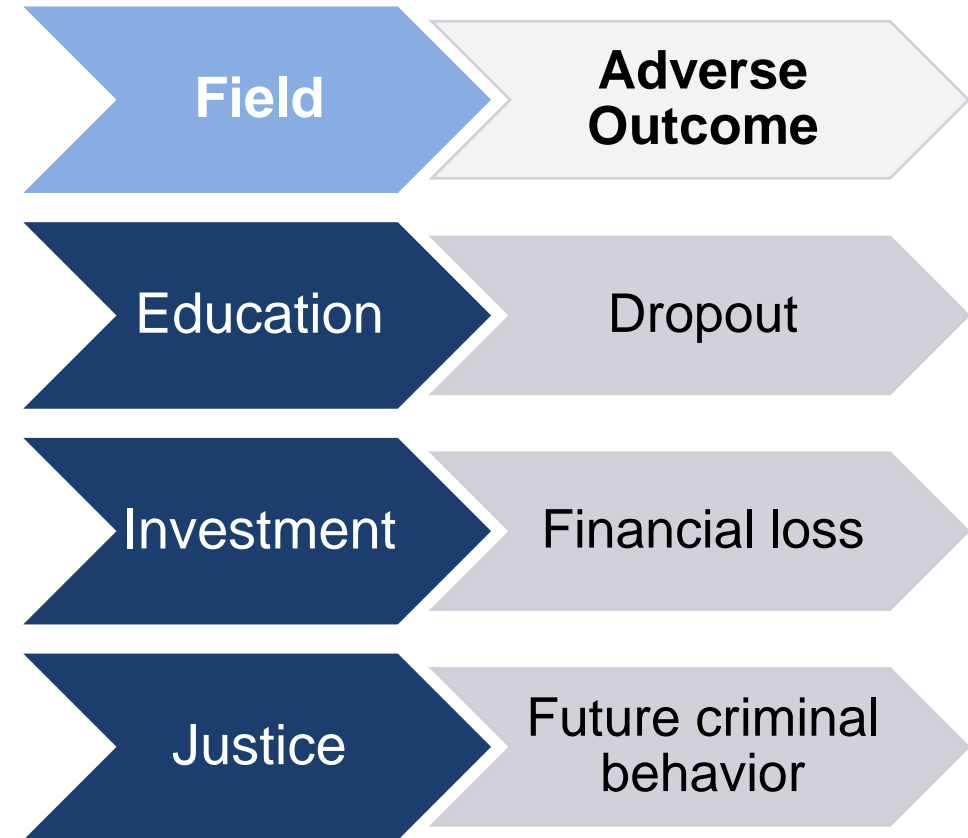
Field	Adverse Outcome
Education	Dropout
Investment	Financial loss
Justice	Future criminal behavior

Berk, R. (2016). A primer on criminal justice risk assessments. In *Penn Criminology Working Papers Collection*.
Center for Court Innovation. (2017). Demystifying Risk Assessment Key Principles and Controversies.

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Risk Assessment

- Use large datasets of past trends to predict future outcomes
- In justice settings, risk assessment is most used to predict new criminal behavior
- Likelihood is NOT certainty

Did not reoffend
Reoffended

	0-2 Low Risk	3-5 Moderate Risk	6-8 High Risk
Did not reoffend	70%	40%	20%
Reoffended	30%	60%	80%
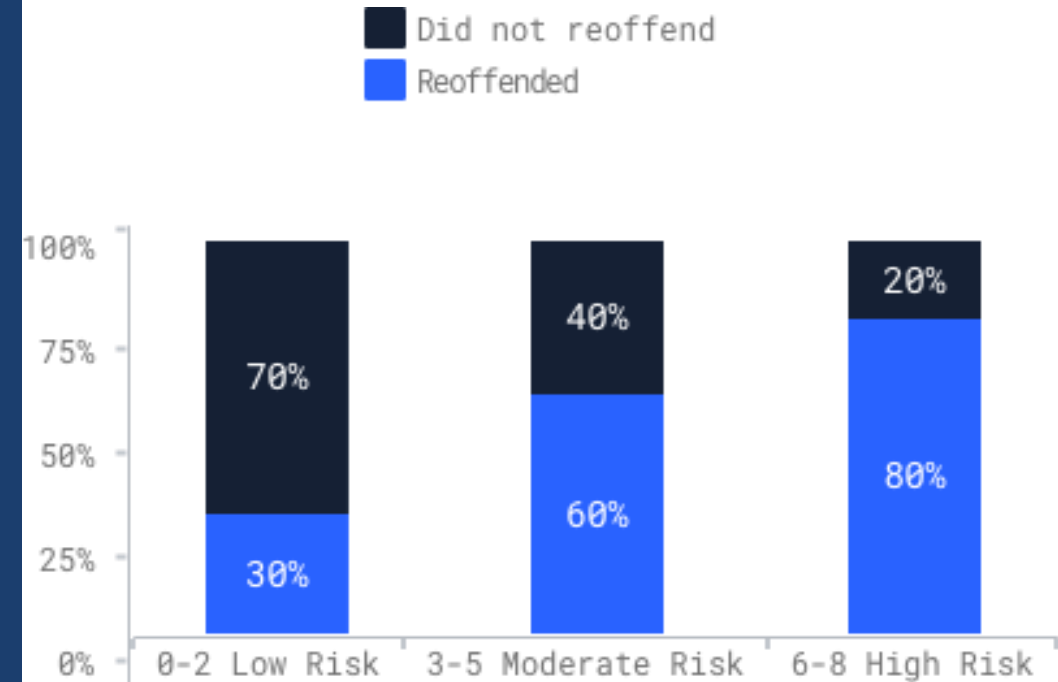
Graph from: Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse. Bureau of Justice Assistance. https://bja.ojp.gov/program/psrac

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Risk Principle

Match level of service to level of risk

Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk clients

- Higher risk clients need more intensive services

- Low risk clients require little to no intervention

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it"

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Recidivism Rates of Low and High Risk Individuals - Treatment and Non-Treatment Groups
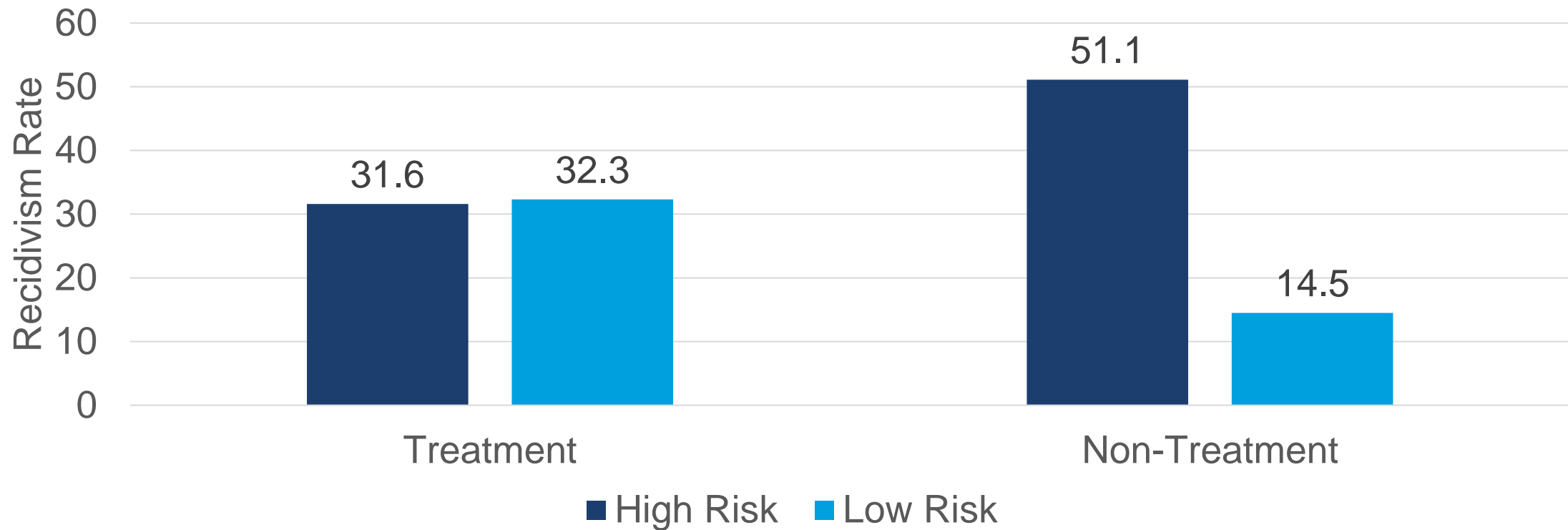
Bonta, J. et al, 2000. A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of an Intensive Rehabilitation Supervision Program. Vol. 27 No 3:317 – 329. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*

Risk Principle

Triage: Cutting the "Tail" Off One End of Your Caseload

2. Need

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Risk tells us who to target

Need is what we can do about it
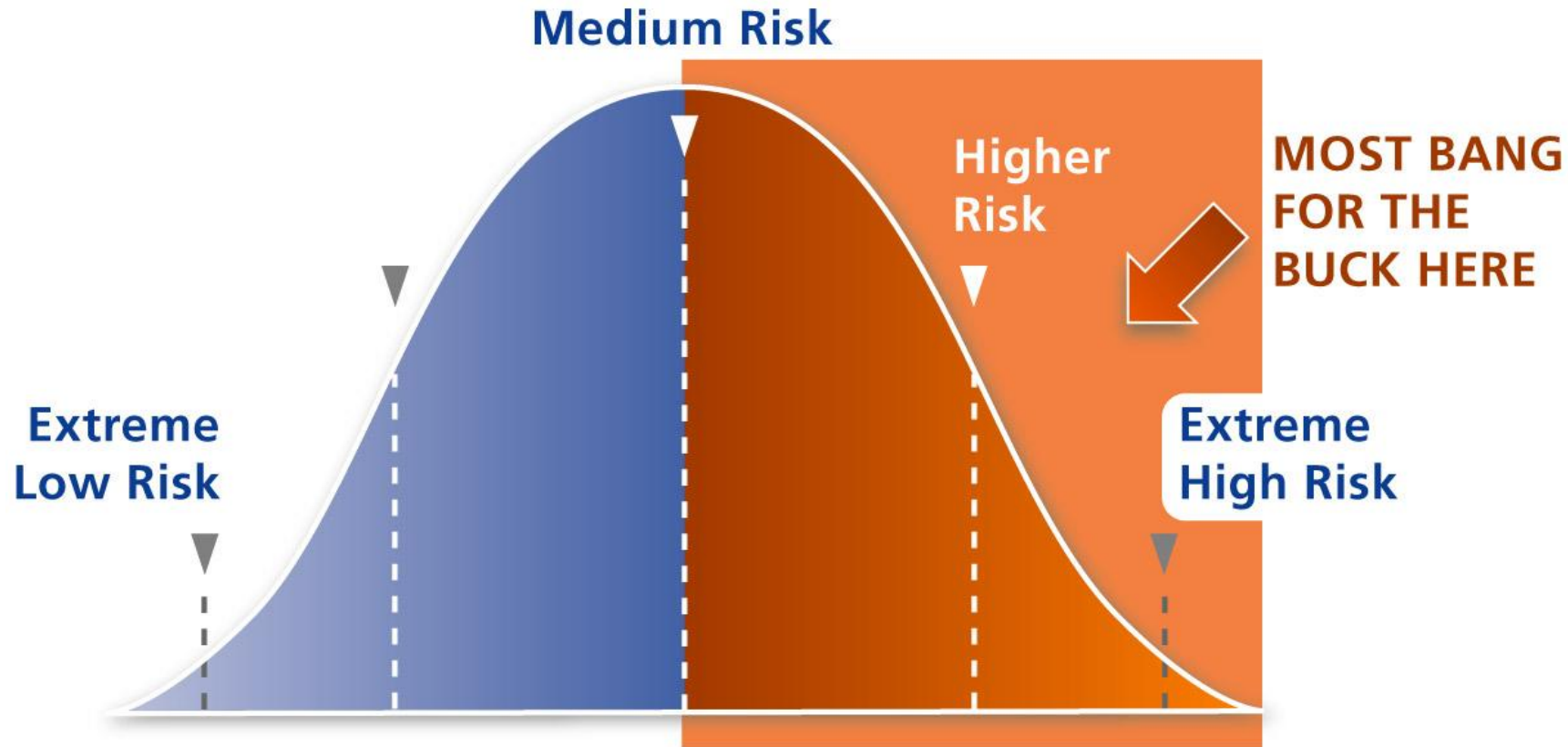
What areas in a person's life should be **targeted for intervention** or supervision to **decrease their likelihood of future criminal behavior.**

Areas that can be targeted to decrease likelihood of future criminal behavior are **criminogenic needs.**

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Criminogenic Needs

What are Criminogenic Needs?

Dynamic or "changeable" risk factors that contribute to the likelihood that someone will commit a crime.

Changes in these factors are associated with changes in recidivism.

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Central 8 Criminogenic Risk Factors

"Big Four" Risk Factors – Most Highly Correlated

Criminal History	Antisocial Personality Pattern	Procriminal Attitudes	Procriminal Associates
• Early onset • High frequency • Variety	• Low self-control • Thrill seeking behavior • Disregard for others	• Thoughts and values support criminal conduct	• Friends and acquaintances model, encourage, support criminal behavior and thoughts

Criminogenic RISK not NEED

Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). *The psychology of criminal conduct,* (5th edn). Lexis Nexis/Anderson Pub, California, USA.

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Discussion Question

Based on the criminogenic factors we just learned, why might a low-risk individual have increased recidivism when they are put in intensive treatment?

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Central 8 Criminogenic Risk Factors

Education/Employment

- Poor performance
- Difficulty with peers and authority
- Lack of interest/ambition

Family/Marital

- Relationship instability
- Poor parenting skills
- Criminal history within family relationships

Leisure

- Anti-social leisure and recreational pursuits

Substance Use

- Alcohol and/or substance use disorder

Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). *The psychology of criminal conduct,* (5th edn). Lexis Nexis/Anderson Pub, California, USA.

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Non-Criminogenic Needs

Self-esteem

Anxiety

Depression

Lack of housing

Parenting skills

Learning differences

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Discussion Question

Although they are NOT criminogenic risk factors, are non-criminogenic needs still important to assess and consider for intervention?

Why or why not?

Non-criminogenic needs should be addressed before or in parallel with criminogenic needs

They may represent a barrier to effective participation in treatment

It's the right thing to do

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3. Responsivity

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Risk → tells us **WHO** to target

Need → tells us **WHAT** to target

→ so **HOW** do we do it?

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What personal strengths or individual factors might influence the effectiveness of treatment services?

General Responsivity

Treatment programs can maximize a person's ability to learn and change by providing cognitive behavioral treatment.
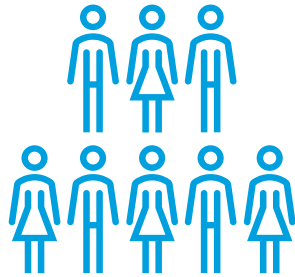
Specific Responsivity

What personal strengths or individual factors might influence the effectiveness of treatment services.

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Responsivity Principle

Identify strengths as possible protective factors that may be built upon in treatment planning	Identify specific factors that might influence the effectiveness of treatment services
• Computer skills • Strong family relationships • High educational level • History of stable employment • Strong ties to recovery community	• Anxiety • ADHD • Motivation level • Gender • Reading level • Primary language

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Discussion Question

How might you build in a responsivity factor into treatment planning?

For a strength or protective factor?

What about for a possible barrier to effective treatment?

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Risk Principle

- Risk for new criminal behavior can be predicted and that correctional interventions should focus on higher risk offenders.

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Treatment Pathway Review

Assessment

Risk, Need, Responsivity

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Why do we use Risk Assessment?

1. Recidivism
2. Resources

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Matching risk reduces recidivism

Empirically valid risk assessments have consistently proven to be more effective than professional judgment alone.

RSAT is intensive treatment.

High risk individuals who benefit from intensive treatment are best identified by risk assessment.

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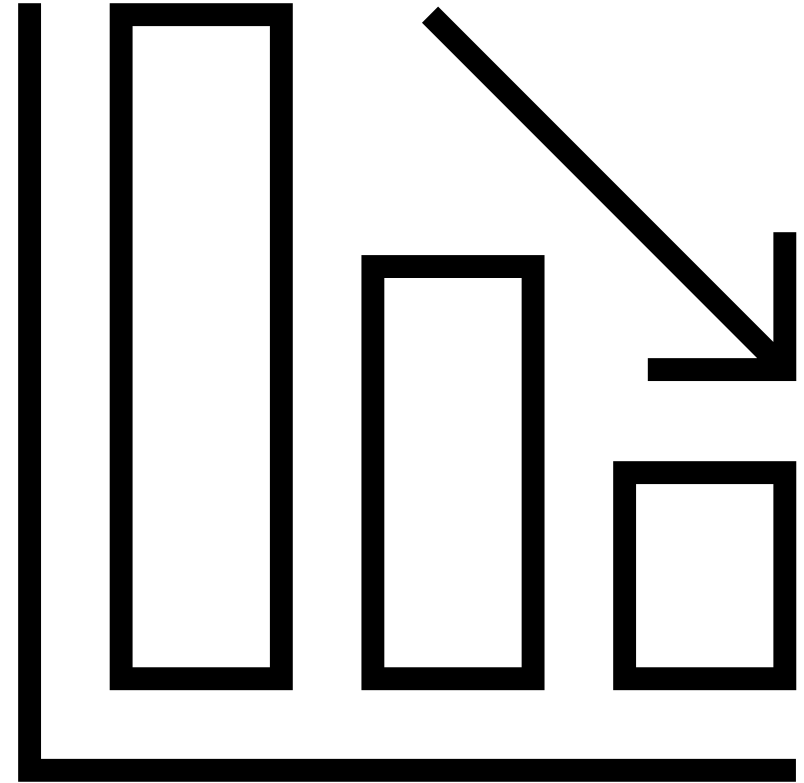
Maximize limited resources

Target high-risk individuals for most "bang for your buck".

Avoid potentially causing harm by providing unneeded treatment to low-risk individuals.

Focus on specific criminogenic and responsivity needs.

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How do I choose an appropriate Risk Assessment?

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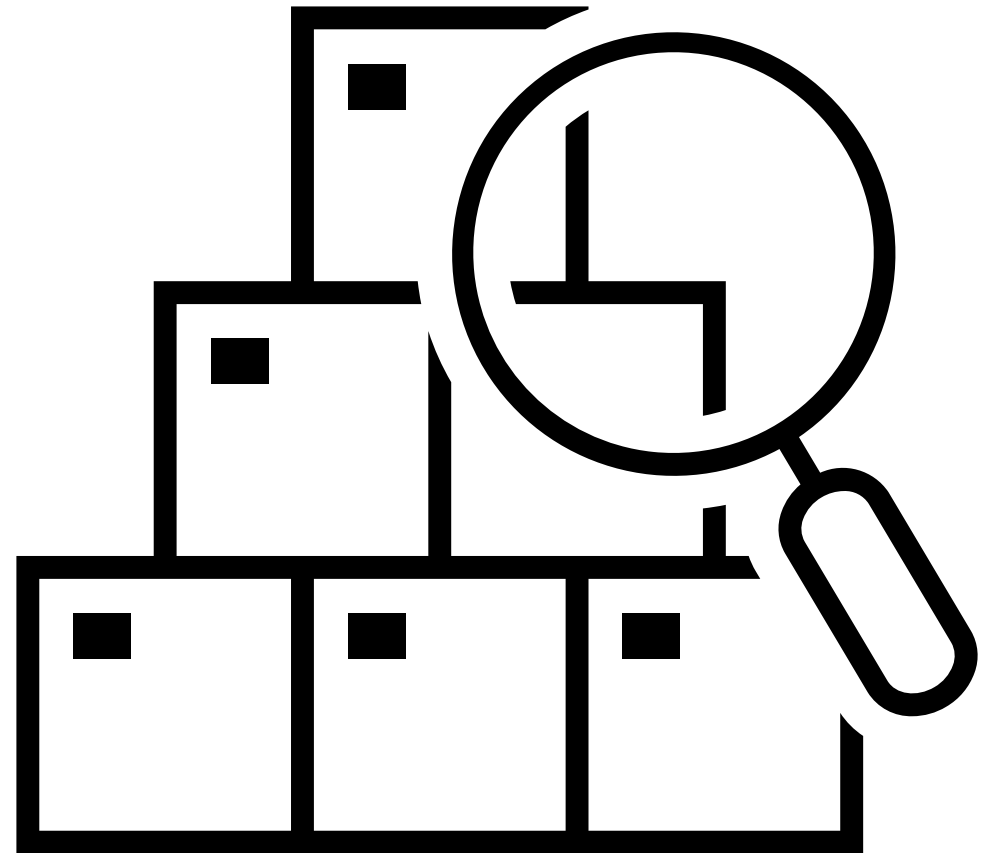# What is validation and why is it important?

Validation is the process of determining how well a tool performs at predicting risk, and a risk assessment's performance is referred to as predictive validity.

Ensures a risk assessment does not exacerbate existing disparities in criminal justice outcomes.

Agencies should plan to monitor and, if possible, improve the performance of tools on a periodic basis.

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BJA's Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse

- The Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse (PSRAC) provides evidence-based information about how to use risk assessments effectively and properly to build safe families and communities.

- Online at https://bja.ojp.gov/program/psrac
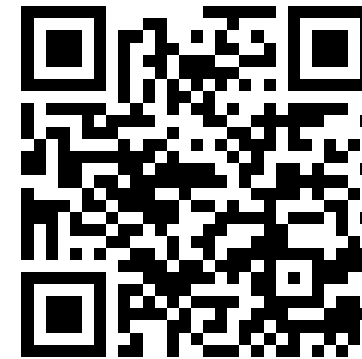
BJA's Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse

Tool Selector

- A repository for tools designed to predict the risk of general recidivism, sexual recidivism, violent recidivism, or pretrial misconduct.

- https://bja.ojp.gov/program/psrac/selection/tool-selector

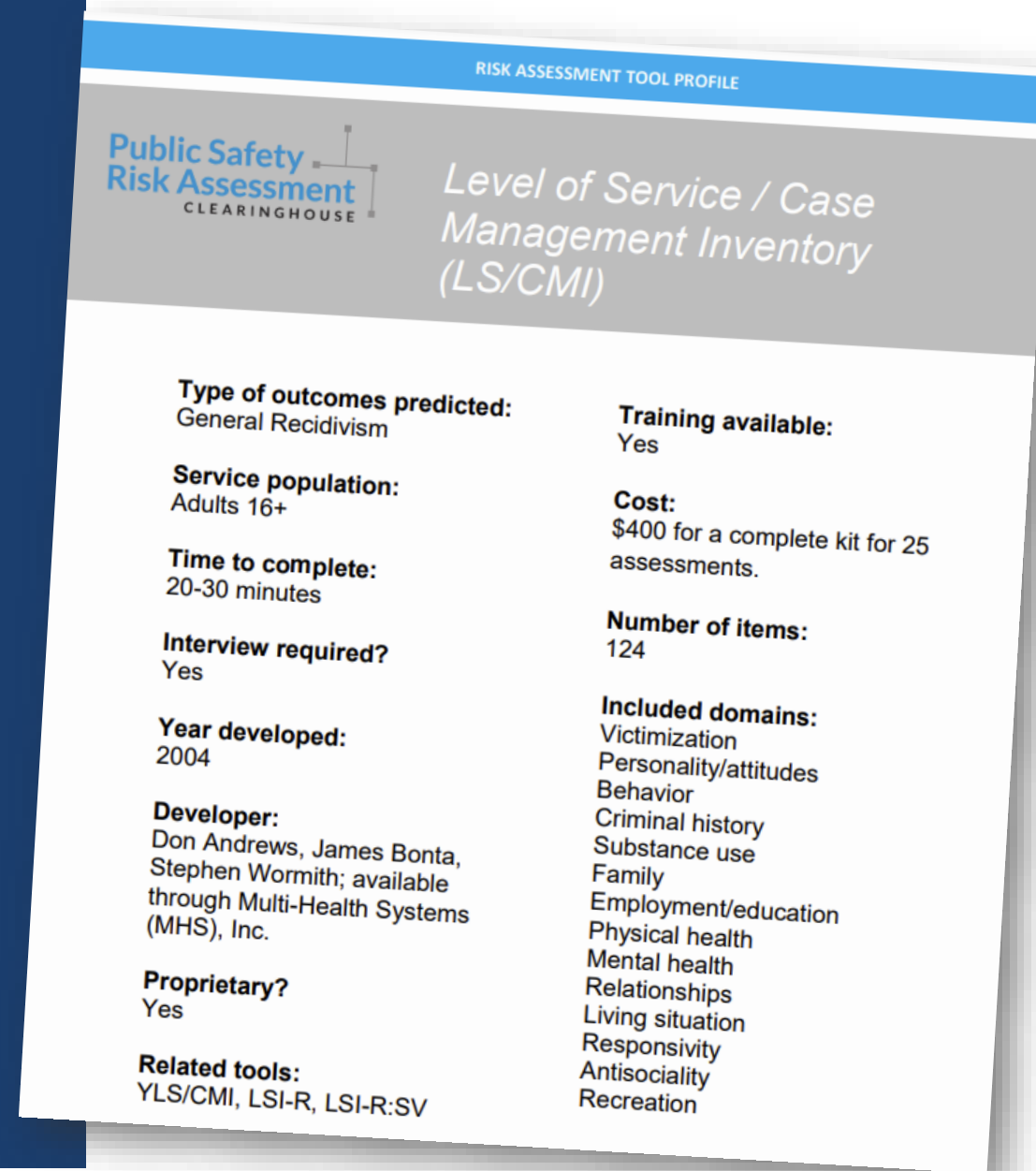**Public Safety Risk Assessment CLEARINGHOUSE**

Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI)

Type of outcomes predicted:
General Recidivism

Service population:
Adults 16+

Time to complete:
20-30 minutes

Interview required?
Yes

Year developed:
2004

Developer:
Don Andrews, James Bonta, Stephen Wormith; available through Multi-Health Systems (MHS), Inc.

Proprietary?
Yes

Related tools:
YLS/CMI, LSI-R, LSI-R:SV

Training available:
Yes

Cost:
$400 for a complete kit for 25 assessments.

Number of items:
124

Included domains:
Victimization
Personality/attitudes
Behavior
Criminal history
Substance use
Family
Employment/education
Physical health
Mental health
Relationships
Living situation
Responsivity
Antisociality
Recreation

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BJA's Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse
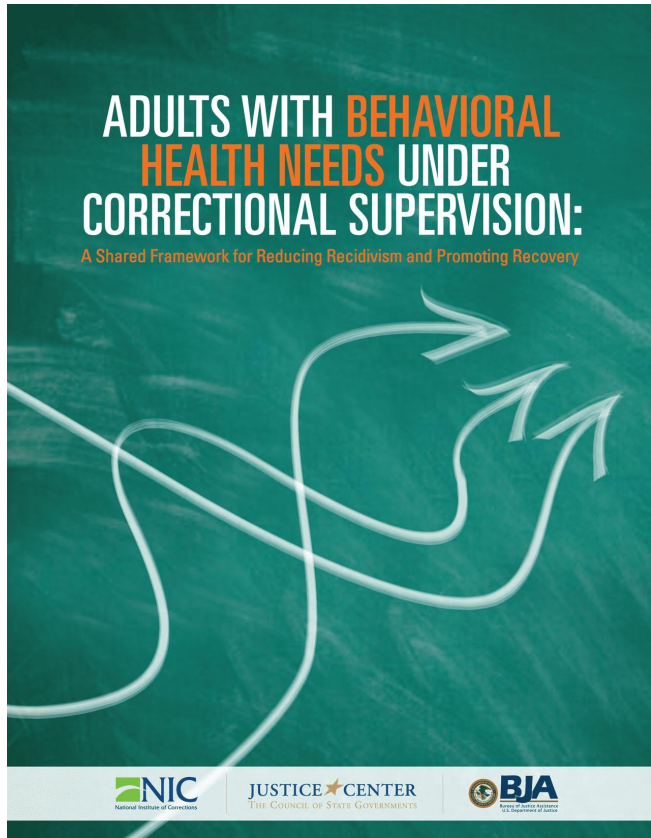
Risk Assessment Landscape

- Interactive data visualization that shows what risk assessments are used across the country at various decision points in the criminal justice system.

- https://bja.ojp.gov/program/psrac/selection/risk-assessment-landscape

State	Region	Risk Assessments
Georgia	South	**Pretrial:** Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R); local-varying **Jail:** Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R); START (Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability); local-varying **Prison:** Static-99R; state-standardized **Parole:** state-standardized **Probation:** state-standardized **Release:** state-standardized

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Adults with Behavioral Health Needs under Correctional Supervision

ADULTS WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS UNDER CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION:

A Shared Framework for Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Recovery

NIC — National Institute of Corrections

JUSTICE CENTER — The Council of State Governments

BJA — Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

- Introduces an evidence-based framework for prioritizing scarce resources based on assessments of individuals' risk of committing a future crime and their treatment and support needs.

[Adults with Behavioral Health Needs under Correctional Supervision](#)

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References

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). The psychology of criminal conduct, (5th edn). Lexis Nexis/Anderson Pub, California, USA.

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- Burke, P. B. & National Institute Of Corrections, U. S. (2008) *TPC reentry handbook: implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to Community model*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Justice, National Institute of Corrections. [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2023692030/.

- Center for Court Innovation. (2017). Demystifying Risk Assessment Key Principles and Controversies. https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/documents/Monograph_March2017_Demystifying%20Risk%20Assessment_1.pdf

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- Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 24. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 1997.

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QUESTIONS
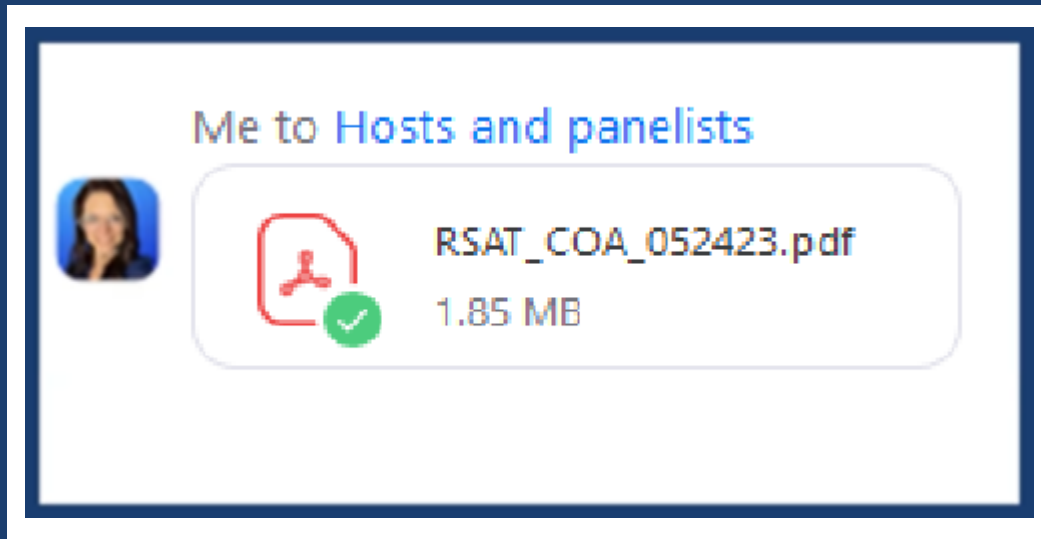
▶ Type your questions in the Q&A box on your screen.

Speaker Contact Info:

Lisa Lundrigan, M.A. | llundrigan@ahpnet.com

Samatha Kossow, MPP | skossow@ahpnet.com

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You can download the certificate of attendance from the chat.

CERTIFICATE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

1 Continuing Education Hour (CEH) approved by NAADAC, the Association of Addiction Professionals

Pass 10-question quiz with 7 correct answers

Download certificate upon completion of the quiz

October 30, 2024 RSAT webinar CEH quiz link:

https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8062726/October-30-2024-RSAT-Webinar-CEH

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CONTACT

http://www.rsat-tta.com

Stephen Keller
RSAT TTA Coordinator | rsattta@ahpnet.com

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