

Predictors of General Recidivism

(Adapted from Mills, Kroner & Morgan, 2011)

NOTE: These general predictors apply to all offenders.

<u>Static</u>	<u>Dynamic</u>
Prior convictions/incarcerations (within 3-5 years)*	Antisocial attitudes and/or peers
Prior supervision failure	Instability – employment, family, financial, leisure
Early onset of antisociality	Current substance abuse
Young age (< age 24)**	Resistance to treatment/supervision
Number of criminal associations	Mood problems - anxiety, depression
History of alcohol abuse	
School failure	

Predictors of Non-Sexual Violence

(in addition General Recidivism Factors)

<u>Additional Static</u>	<u>Additional Dynamic</u>
History of violent behaviour/convictions	Hostile attributions
	Negative affect - anger

Predictors of Violence in Offenders With Mental Disorders

(in addition to General Recidivism Factors)

<u>Additional Static</u>	<u>Additional Dynamic</u>
	Mood disturbance/lability
	Co-morbid substance abuse disorder
	Aggressive attributional style – suspiciousness, paranoia, delusions, perceived threats

Predictors of Sexual Violence

(in addition to General Recidivism Factors)

<u>Additional Static</u>	<u>Additional Dynamic</u>
Prior sexual convictions	Access to victims
Male victim	Sexual preoccupation
Sexual deviance (phallometric)	Emotional identification with children
Stranger victim	Intimacy deficits

Predictors of Intimate Partner Violence

(in addition to General Recidivism Factors)

<u>Additional Static</u>	<u>Additional Dynamic</u>
Prior intimate partner incidents/convictions	Access to victims
Prior violation of non-contact orders	Stalking
Confinement/control of victim	

*unpublished findings; ** extrapolated

Decision Rules for Using Risk Assessments

1. Use with Aboriginal offenders

Although there are a few validated risk scales for use with Aboriginal offenders, debates continue at the policy level regarding their use. Nonetheless, the factors are relevant to consider when making decisions regarding Aboriginal offenders (i.e., those cases which flag significant numbers of factors for general recidivism and different types of violence cannot be considered low risk simply on the basis of ethnicity).

2. Use with women offenders

Again, there are only a few validated risk scales for use with women offenders. Existing evidence suggests the factors cited previously apply to women, despite their not being gender-specific. Lower cutoffs may apply to women compared to men. Such factors provide limited additional predictive accuracy but may inform intervention and responsivity.

3. Selection of risk scales

In most situations the corrections agency will determine the risk scale(s) being used. There is still a requirement that consumers (i.e., parole boards) assure themselves that there is validity data regarding the measure and its application to the population of interest.

In situations where multiple risk scales are used to inform the same outcome (i.e., general recidivism), consumers must be aware that overlap among scales suggest one is not superior to another and that multiple scales does not increase predictive accuracy.

4. Selection of risk scale for type of offender and outcome

For each type of outcome there is an ascribed risk scale. This means that for sexual offenders, risk measures for general recidivism, sexual violence, and non-sexual violence are preferred. Similarly, for intimate partner violence, consumers would minimally expect there to be an estimate of IPV in addition to other risk estimates for other outcomes.

Failure to include specific risk scales designed and validated to predict specific outcomes will increase decision errors.

5. Resolving competing risk estimates

In the event of competing estimates of risk, the prudent approach is to defer to the more conservative estimate. For instance, if an offender is determined to be moderate on general recidivism and high on risk for IPV, then the offender should be considered high risk. Risk management decision must be specific to the unique aspects of each case.

6. Resolving competing risk opinions

In the event of competing opinions from different sources (risk assessors) it is imperative that decision makers reflect each opinion and a rationale for discounting one and accepting the other. In this manner, a subsequent review will affirm the decision maker carefully considered all the requisite information not simply that which is in support of their decision.

7. Using risk estimates in risk analysis and case planning

Risk estimates provide an aggregate probability of a specified event; they do not reflect a decision per se. The presence of specific factors informs case-level decisions and case planning. The dynamic factors must be reduced or managed in order to mitigate that risk estimate.