AN ANALYSIS OF RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

JUNE 2021

MARAC PROJECT

ABOUT WOMANACT

Woman Abuse Council of Toronto (WomanACT) envisions a world where all women are safe and have access to equal opportunities. We work collaboratively to eradicate violence against women through community mobilization, research, policy, and education.

The organization has been operating as a community-based coalition since 1991 and became a registered charity in 2010. Today, WomanACT has 30 members who represent key community providers and institutions working to provide a community response to violence against women.

Working closely with the violence against women sector, governments, industry leaders, communities and survivors, we strive to promote knowledge sharing, build capacity and generate public discussion in order to advance women's safety and gender equity.

This project is funded by

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Women and Gender
Equality Canada

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Research conducted through the MARAC project identified a gap in the consistent use of a risk assessment tool across agencies serving women fleeing violence. Project partners describe the varied use and application of risk assessment tools often causes breakdowns when working inter-sectorally. This document serves as guidance for partners who are engaged on the MARAC project or communities seeking to establish a high-risk table focused on IPV to select a risk assessment tool that makes sense for their community.

MARAC stands for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools - MARAC Project

RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO REVIEW

Below is a list of risk assessments that will be analyzed for their fit to the MARAC project use and application.

1

REDWOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

2

DANGER ASSESSMENT

3

ONTARIO DOMESTIC ASSAULT RISK ASSESSMENT

4

DASH CHECKLIST

5

B-SAFER

METHODOLOGY OF ANALYSIS

To analyze the applicability of each risk assessment – each assessment will be graded through a simple checkmark process. If the risk assessment meets the criteria item, it will be given a checkmark, each checkmark is equivalent to one point. The tallies will be scored following the evaluation of each risk assessment, and the assessment with the highest number of points will be deemed the best risk assessment tool.

METHODOLOGY OF ANALYSIS

Criteria for assessment:
- Is there a focus on high risk IPV?
- Is it easy to use?
- Does it include factors of vulnerability?
- Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)
- Does it include questions on same sex relationships?
- Is it available in different languages?
- Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?
- Is it easily accessible?
- Can it be accessed for free?
- Can it be used without training?
- Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?
- Could it be used by survivors?
- Is there a component for professional judgement?
- Is it survivor centered?
- Does it include questions on coercion?
- Does it provide a number of risk of lethality?
- Is the language inclusive?
- Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

score

13

Redwood Risk Assessment

Assessment Criteria	Finding
Is there a focus on high-risk IPV?	✔
Is it easy to use?	✔
Does it include factors on vulnerability? (Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)	✔
Does it include questions on same sex relationships?	✘
Is it available in different languages?	✘
Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?	✘
Is easily accessible?	✔
Can it be accessed for free?	✔
Can it be used without training?	✔
Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?	✔
Could it be used by survivors?	✔
Is there a space for a component of professional judgment?	✔
Does it include questions on coercion?	✔
Does it provide a number/level of risk of lethality?	✘
Is the language used inclusive?	✔
Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?	✔
Is it survivor centered?	✔

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools - MARAC Project

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

score

12

─────

Danger Assessment

Assessment Criteria	Finding
Is there a focus on high-risk IPV?	✔
Is it easy to use?	✔
Does it include factors on vulnerability? (Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)	✘
Does it include questions on same sex relationships?	✘
Is it available in different languages?	✔
Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?	✔
Is easily accessible?	✔
Can it be accessed for free?	✔
Can it be used without training?	✘
Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?	✔
Could it be used by survivors?	✔
Is there a space for a component of professional judgment?	✘
Does it include questions on coercion?	✔
Does it provide a number/level of risk of lethality?	✔
Is the language used inclusive?	✘
Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?	✔
Is it survivor centered?	✔

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools - MARAC Project

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

score
7

Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment

Assessment Criteria	Finding
Is there a focus on high-risk IPV?	✗
Is it easy to use?	✓
Does it include factors on vulnerability? (Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)	✗
Does it include questions on same sex relationships?	✗
Is it available in different languages?	✗
Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?	✓
Is easily accessible?	✓
Can it be accessed for free?	✓
Can it be used without training?	✓
Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?	✓
Could it be used by survivors?	✗
Is there a space for a component of professional judgment?	✗
Does it include questions on coercion?	✗
Does it provide a number/level of risk of lethality?	✗
Is the language used inclusive?	✗
Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?	✓
Is it survivor centered?	✗

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools - MARAC Project

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

—

DASH Checklist

Assessment Criteria	Finding
Is there a focus on high-risk IPV?	✔
Is it easy to use?	✔
Does it include factors on vulnerability? (Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)	✔
Does it include questions on same sex relationships?	✘
Is it available in different languages?	✘
Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?	✘
Is easily accessible?	✔
Can it be accessed for free?	✔
Can it be used without training?	✔
Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?	✔
Could it be used by survivors?	✔
Is there a space for a component of professional judgment?	✔
Does it include questions on coercion?	✔
Does it provide a number/level of risk of lethality?	✔
Is the language used inclusive?	✔
Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?	✔
Is it survivor centered?	✔

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools - MARAC Project

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

B-Safer

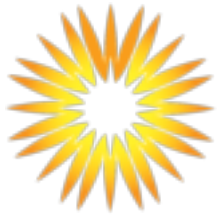| Assessment Criteria	Finding
Is there a focus on high-risk IPV?	✔
Is it easy to use?	✔
Does it include factors on vulnerability? (Racialized identities, citizenship status, age, access to transportation, physical or mental barriers)	✘
Does it include questions on same sex relationships?	✘
Is it available in different languages?	✘
Is it widely used in Ontario and/or by project partners?	✔
Is easily accessible?	✘
Can it be accessed for free?	✘
Can it be used without training?	✘
Does it take into consideration an escalation of violence?	✔
Could it be used by survivors?	✘
Is there a space for a component of professional judgment?	✔
Does it include questions on coercion?	✔
Does it provide a number/level of risk of lethality?	✘
Is the language used inclusive?	✔
Does it ask questions about the perpetrator(s)?	✔
Is it survivor centered?	✔

CONCLUSION

Final Analysis Results

Redwood Risk Assessment	13
Danger Assessment	12
Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment	7
B-Safer	9
DASH Checklist	14

As a result of the analysis, the DASH checklist is recommended for the following reasons:

- It's focus on cases of high risk intimate partner violence, and a focus on lethality
- It is easy to use, does not require training, is easily accessible and free
- It includes a space to examine factors of vulnerability
- It takes into consideration an escalation of violence and factors of coercion
- It will provide a "number" on the level of/risk to lethality
- It includes questions on the perpetrator(s), while being survivor-centered.

WomanACT
WOMAN ABUSE COUNCIL OF TORONTO

An Analysis of Risk Assessment Tools

MARAC