

RISA Tool

Risk Identification Worksheet

NOTE: RISA is a self-directed tool for service providers to use with professional discretion and in line with relevant organizational policies, professional codes of conduct, and laws. The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic does not assume any responsibility or liability for assessments conducted using this tool. Always refer to your own organization's policies and procedures, which take precedent over the content provided in this tool and consult with your supervisor.

Risk Identification Worksheet

This Worksheet is designed to help you (the service provider) make a professional judgement about the risk of gender-based violence that your client may be experiencing. The report will be generated based on your responses to the RISA Questionnaire. You can save or print off the worksheet to discuss in more detail with your client, keeping in mind guidelines for trauma-informed risk assessment shared in our website www.riseaboverisk.ca.

Things to keep in mind:

- This worksheet is intended as a starting point and content may not be applicable depending on your client's unique situation. Please use discretion.
- The worksheet is not a definitive assessment of risk since risks can be dynamic and change rapidly due to changes in circumstances. Remember to use your professional judgment, especially if your client is unable to share their situation in detail.
- It is important to acknowledge that many factors can prevent proper disclosure and, if necessary, you may want to conduct a more in-depth assessment after building a relationship with your client.

Tips to support your professional assessment:

- Use the RISA Questionnaire: This worksheet will be based on your answers to the RISA Questionnaire. You must review your answers to the RISA Questionnaire and use the Worksheet Table (page 2) to select the risks identified during your assessment with your client.
- Completion rate: The quality of your assessment will depend in part on how complete your questionnaire is. If there are skipped answers in your questionnaire, you may want to consider completing these answers before making a professional judgment.
- It may take time to make a professional judgement: Your assessment may be immediate or may require time for reflection and/or consulting with a supervisor or peers. This will depend on many things, including your level of experience and familiarity with the tool and the unique needs of each client and the setting.
- Consider what is appropriate to share with your client: Depending on your assessment, you may decide to move straight into safety planning with your client, by using the "safety plan" report at www.riseaboverisk.ca. Or you may decide to communicate immediately with your client about the risk factors identified before moving on to safety planning strategies and action plans. In all instances, it is important to always be mindful when informing clients that they might be at risk of serious harm or lethality. For a refresher on key approaches, check out our Learning Hub at www.riseaboverisk.ca.

Risk Factors by Clusters Table

The RISA Tool risk factors cluster table comprises 3 main clusters. It includes validated and not-validated risk factors captured by recommendations from death review committees, mass casualty reports and research studies. The breakdown of each cluster is described below.

[Cluster #1] Validated Risk Factors for Serious Harm/ Lethality

Risk factors for serious harm and lethality are indicators validated by research studies and/or recommended by Death Review Committees and Mass Casualties' reports that have been associated with life threatening and fatal outcomes for individuals who have experienced gender-based violence.

[Cluster #2] Validated Risk Factors for Potential re-assault

Risk factors for recidivism are indicators that have been related to a person's who caused harm risk of re-assault in the context of Intimate Partner Violence.

[Cluster #3] Additional Factors included in the RISA Tool based on our research.

These are additional factors that emerged in community-based research conducted by the Barbra Schlifer Clinic in the development of this tool. While they have not been listed as validated factors, our research showed the importance of considering such factors when conducting holistic safety planning.

Worksheet Table

Based on the RISA Questionnaire that you completed with your client, please identify which risk factors or safety factors are present in their current situation by checking the box to the left of the factor description. Note: if there are factors that the client preferred not to answer or that you skipped for now, you may want to note these as well by circling the box.

CLUSTER #1 RISK FACTORS		
	Risk factor/ Safety factor	Actions to Consider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current living situation: preparing to leave the relationship/ living situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: "If/When preparing to leave"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current living situation: recently separated from the person(s) who caused harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: "After separation"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal situation: Disputes over child(ren) custody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: "Starting a Family Court Application"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal situation: Starting an application in family court and/or there are ongoing or past court proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Risk Factor Cluster #1 if there are disputes or recent/pending separation. Review safety plan content with client: "Starting a Family Court Application"

<input type="checkbox"/>	Person(s) causing harm isolated them from family/friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coercive Control/Stalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Escalation of physical abuse (frequency or severity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in life circumstances of person(s) who caused harm (e.g. Loss of a family member, job loss, financial difficulties, immigration problems, disability, medical condition, mental health issues)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excessive use of alcohol and/ or drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-harm /attempt suicide of person(s) who caused harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Past Criminal charges/ conviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attempts to choke/strangle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forced or pressured to engage in sexual activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assault or threats with a weapon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Threats to kill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abuse during pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Harm or threats to family members and/or friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pet abuse/ Livestock abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #1 • Review safety plan content with client: "Pet Safety/ Livestock safety"

CLUSTER #2 RISK FACTORS		
Risk factor/ Safety factor		Actions to Consider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #2 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional/psychological abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #2 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
CLUSTER #3 RISK FACTORS		
Risk factor/ Safety factor		Actions to Consider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Breach of court orders or resistance to being arrested by the police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: "If/When there is a Protection Order (restraining order/ bail condition in place)"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal situation: There is a protection order in place (e.g. restraining order/ bail conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for Risk Factor Cluster #3 if protection orders are breached. • Review safety plan content with client: "If/When there is a Protection Order (restraining order/ bail condition in place)"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forcible confinement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial control/ abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: economic coercion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber stalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: technological safety
<input type="checkbox"/>	Client has sought medical attention due to abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Damage of belongings or property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaged in criminal/illegal activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Involvement of Child Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: "Safety Plan with Children and Youth"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about involvement of Child Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: "Safety Plan with Children and Youth"

<input type="checkbox"/>	Police have been called	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about Police involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about accessing services from community-based agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Race or ethnic identity impacted access to resources or safety measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety planning considerations for racialized communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Faith impacted access to resources or safety measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: general & emergency safety strategies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender identity and/or sexual orientation impacted access to resources or safety measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations for 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Particular practices or beliefs/ Violence against someone who did not follow family norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: Additional safety considerations in cases of Forced Marriage
<input type="checkbox"/>	History of forced marriage in the client's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Additional safety considerations in cases of Forced Marriage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pressure to get married by the client's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: Additional safety considerations in cases of Forced Marriage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Client is concerned that family is planning to take her/him/them out of the country to marry someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Factor Cluster #3 • Review safety plan content with client: Additional safety considerations in cases of Forced Marriage

ADDITIONAL SAFETY FACTORS

Factor Description		Actions to Consider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current living situation: living with the person(s) who caused harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review safety plan content with client: "If/When living with the person(s) who caused harm"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: Older person (age 65+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations for Older people"

<input type="checkbox"/>	Lives in a rural, remote, and/or Northern region in Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations when living in Rural, Remote, or Northern communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: gender-diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: 2SLGBTQIA+ and/or gender-diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations for 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: Indigenous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety planning considerations for Indigenous communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: Racialized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety planning considerations for racialized communities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: Immigration Status other than Canadian Citizen (refugee, immigrant, non-status, temporary resident)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations for Immigrant, Refugee, or Non-Status People"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identity Factor: Person with a Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Additional safety considerations for People with Disabilities"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Safety Plan with Children and Youth"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has pets and/or livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safety plan content with client: "Pet Safety/ Livestock safety"

Notes:

Professional Judgment:

Use this section to make any notes or reflections on the potential risks that your client may be facing. Then use our safety plan and action plan templates to plan your next steps (available at www.riseaboverisk.ca).

If upon reflection you need to learn more about risk factors for serious harm and lethality, check-out our learning modules. You may also want to consult with your supervisor on making a risk assessment based on the factors identified.