

## Risk Assessment Tools

This list of validated and not validated risk assessment tools has been developed by Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic’s Risk Assessment project and draws upon various sources from across Canada and internationally. Given that risk assessment practice and research will continue to evolve, the contents of this document will be updated as needed. A total of 15 risk assessment tools and 10 suggested readings were used in the compilation of this resource list.

The Clinic’s Risk Assessment project builds a blueprint for risk assessment and safety frameworks that is founded on a trauma-informed approach. It considers intersecting identity factors for Indigenous women, Black women, racialized women, immigrant and refugee women, women with precarious immigration status, women with disabilities, LGTBQ2S+ and gender-diverse survivors who are more at risk of gender-based violence.

Included is a list of safety planning for specific populations as well as articles related to each one of them. The experiences of these groups have not always been considered in the design and implementation of “standard” safety planning tools. An intersectional approach can help ensure that the needs of all survivors are considered in planning for safety from Gender-Based Violence.

Most risk assessment tools measure the risk of violence and/or recidivism of violence against an intimate partner. In addition, there is a focus on physical violence, potential serious harm, or lethality risk factors. We acknowledge that these tools are essential to identify risks for future harm, however, it is essential to investigate other types of violence experienced by survivors such as coercive controlling behaviour, stalking, psychological abuse, financial abuse, spiritual, so-called honour-based violence, and human trafficking.

The tools outlined below address multiple forms of violence and measure the risk of intersected abuses such as stalking, harassment, honour-based violence, and intimate partner violence. Others make the link between sexual violence and other forms of violence against women.

The Clinic’s project team has compiled and revised 75 risk assessment tools used in Canada and internationally. The list can be shared upon request.

## Multiple Forms of Violence Tools

### Stalking

**SHARP Tool:** The Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile is a web-based assessment tool used in the United States to measure risk of stalking and harassment. This tool is a positive model of a strengths-based measure. The questions were designed from responses with survivors. The tool does not recommend a specific course of action, but enables survivors to access the information and decide for themselves what is best.

**SAM Tool:** The Guidelines for Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM) is a structured risk assessment with 30 items meant to address the nature of stalking, people who caused harm risk factors, and survivors' vulnerability factors. The SAM tool showcases the intersection between intimate partner violence and stalking behaviour, as well as the risk of serious physical harm resulting from the stalking behaviour.

### So-called Honour-Based Violence

**PATRIARCH Tool:** The tool has a set of structured professional judgment guidelines on risk assessment and management. It contains a checklist of 15 risk and vulnerability factors for patriarchal violence where honour is a motive.

It is important to note here that scholars who use a critical race lens have raised significant concerns about so-called "honour-based violence" being identified as a specific form of violence, as this is often used to stigmatize ethnic or cultural minority communities. So-called "Honour"-Based Violence is a specific form of GBV that is oftentimes perpetrated by close family members of a survivor for perceived violations of the family's "honour". Offenders are not necessarily intimate partners.

**DASH Tool:** Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence Risk Identification and Risk Assessment and Management Model tool is used in the United Kingdom. The tool addresses risk of several forms of violence, including honour-based violence, stalking, harassment, and domestic violence.



## Human Trafficking

**Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool:** The Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool is designed for use across various health care, behavioral health, social services, and public health settings. The tool assesses adult clients for human trafficking victimization or risk for potential trafficking victimization. It is a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate intervention tool.

Human trafficking is another form of GBV that has likewise received some critique from anti-racist scholars for the ways in which policy responses promote increased surveillance and stigmatization of racialized groups.

## Intersectional Harms Tools

The vast majority of risk assessment tools for gender-based violence measure risk of future violence but an element of best practice is to also consider intersectional harms that can increase risks, impact survivors' safety and prevent help-seeking. As a result, in order to have a holistic assessment of a survivor's situation, it is imperative to consider additional harms. There are a few risk assessment tools that focus on the unique situations of survivors such as gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, and immigration status. Tools that have accounted for the impact of one or more intersections are an example of best practice, as they allow for the necessary consideration of the unique circumstances of the individuals involved. Some examples of these tools are highlighted below.

## Same-sex relationships

**Danger Assessment – Revised (DA-R):** the DA-R adapts the danger assessment for female same-sex couples, a demographic which has largely been ignored in traditional risk assessments. However, any other intersections of the survivor's life are not considered. It is the 18-item that assesses for re-assault in female same-sex intimate relationships. 10 of these factors pertain to the unique risks faced by women in same-sex relationships

## Survivors living with Disabilities

**Safer & Stronger Program (SSP):** The SSP is a tool is built around the experiences of survivors living with disabilities. The tool was developed in consultation with survivors with disabilities, as well as with service providers working with this population. The SSP tool measures physical, sexual and emotional abuse against women with physical and cognitive disabilities.



## Immigrant and refuge populations

**Bridge to Safety (B2S) tool:** The BTS integrates protocols for screening and responding to domestic and sexual assault. It measures the risk of both future domestic violence and sexual violence in refugee and immigrant populations. It includes direct screening, open screening, safety planning and service plan tools.

**The Four Aspects Screening Tool (FAST):** FAST is a risk screening and assessment tool minority, newcomer, immigrant, and collectivist culture groups. FAST measures the risk of future domestic violence by examining the following family risk factors: (1) universal; (2) ethno-cultural; (3) migration experience; and (4) religious faith (Rossiter et al, Brief Four, 9). Victims can work with Coordinated Organization Response Teams to develop intervention based upon particular family circumstances.

**Danger Assessment – Immigrant women (DA-I):** This adapted danger assessment tool examines factors specifically relevant for immigrant women. The DA-I predicts the risk of domestic violence and recidivism (including lethality) through the lens of culturally specific risk factors, including language barriers and those related to newcomer status. While the tool is promising in that it addresses some of the specific risks of newcomer, immigrant women, the tool is not geared to address the other intersections of their lives.

## Indigenous Population

**Walking the Path Together:** It is a Canadian risk assessment model that measures the risk of future family violence, child abuse, and lethality. Walking the Path Together combines the Danger Assessment with factors specifically meant to address the unique situation of Indigenous women living on reserves, including deprivation from cultural practices, specific substance abuse issues, and a risk assessment for children.

## Survivor-centred approach

**Factors to Consider When Domestic Violence Safety Planning** tool: it was developed by the British Columbia Housing and the British Columbia Ministry of Justice. The tool examines risk and safety under five main sections: relationship factors, abuser factors, victim safety factors, system factors, and other considerations. The tool is also survivor-centric, as the assessment is from the victim's perspective and focuses heavily on her perspective.



## Child-Focused

**The Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix:** It is from the United Kingdom and measures family violence, with a focus on the resulting risk to a child living in the home. It is a unique tool in that it examines the risk and incidences of family violence, mostly experienced by the mother, but focuses upon a potential intervention for the child's sake. It showcases an intersectional, multifaceted tool because examines the intersections of specific protective factors, ethnicity (particularly Black individuals), culture, social status, disability, language, and mental health issues.

## Family Court Focused

**Intimate Partner Violence Risk Identification and Assessment tool ( IPV RIA Tool):** The IPV RIA tool was created by the Barbra Schlifer Clinic for family court stakeholders to identify risks of future harm for survivors of intimate partner violence who are in contact with the family court. The tool takes into consideration physical, emotional, mental, social/cultural, financial, legal and spiritual abuse and will also take into account the multiple sources of oppression and systemic barriers that women experience. It includes a session that explore questions around the best interest of the child test in family law as well potential child abuse. The tool has two levels of assessment followed by a session that helps with safety planning based on the risks identified.

## Suggested readings:

1. A Jaaber, Radhia. & Das Dasgupta, Shamita. "Assessing Social Risks of Battered Women" (2016), online (pdf): *Praxis International* <<http://praxisinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AssessingSocialRisk.pdf>>.
2. Campbell, M., Dawson, M., Jaffe, P., & Straatman, A.L. (2016). Domestic Violence Death Review Committees: Speaking for the Dead to Protect the Living. Domestic Homicide Brief (1). London, Ontario: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative. Retrieved from [http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief\\_1\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_1_FINAL_0.pdf)
3. Campbell, M., Hilton, NZ., Kropp, PR., Dawson, M., & Jaffe, P. (2016). Domestic Violence Risk Assessment: Informing Safety Planning & Risk Management. Domestic Homicide Brief (2). London, Ontario: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative.
4. Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations (CDHPIVP) Literature Review on Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Safety Planning <http://www.cdhpi.ca/literature-review-report#in>



5. Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children Domestic Violence. (2012). Risk Assessment and Management Curriculum. Retrieved from [http://onlinetraining.learningtoendabuse.ca/sites/default/files/lessons/DVRAM%20full-text%20December%202012\\_1.pdf](http://onlinetraining.learningtoendabuse.ca/sites/default/files/lessons/DVRAM%20full-text%20December%202012_1.pdf)
6. David, R., Olszowy, L., Reif, K., Saxton, M., Campbell, M., Dubé, M., Dawson, M., & Jaffe, P. (2017). Children and Domestic Homicide: Understanding the Risks. Domestic Homicide Brief (3). London, Ontario: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative. Retrieved from [http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief\\_3-Final.pdf](http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_3-Final.pdf)
7. Kropp, P. R. (2008). Intimate partner violence risk assessment and management. *Violence and victims*, 23(2), 202.
8. Myhill, Andy & Katrin Hohl. "The 'Golden Thread': Coercive Control and Risk Assessment for Domestic Violence" (2019) 34:21–22 *J Interpersonal Violence* 4477–4497
9. Northcott, Melissa. *Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment Tools: A Review*. Department of Justice Canada, 2012. online: <http://connect.springerpub.com/lookup/doi/10.1891/1946-6560.4.1.76>
10. Peters, O., Ursel, J., Hoffart, R., Nepinak, J., Dumont-Smith, C. (2018). *Domestic Violence Risk Assessment, Risk Management and Safety Planning with Indigenous Populations* (5) London, Ontario: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative. Retrieved from [http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief\\_5-Online.pdf](http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_5-Online.pdf)
11. Rossiter, K. R., Yercich, S., Baobaid, M., Al Jamal, A., David, R., Fairbairn, J., Dawson, M., & Jaffe, P. (2018). Domestic Homicide in Immigration and Refugee Populations: Culturally-Informed Risk and safety Strategies. Domestic Homicide Brief 4. London, Ontario: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention initiative. Retrieved from [http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief\\_4-Online-Feb2018-linked-references.pdf](http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_4-Online-Feb2018-linked-references.pdf)

