

COMMON RISK ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

VICTIM

Risk factor	Explanation
Victim	
Pregnancy/new birth	Family violence often commences or intensifies during pregnancy and is associated with increased rates of miscarriage, low birth weight, premature birth, fetal injury and fetal death. Family violence during pregnancy is regarded as a significant indicator of future harm to the woman and her child.
Depression/mental health Issue	Victims with a mental illness may be more vulnerable to family violence due to their inability to accurately assess their situation.
Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse	Victims may use alcohol or other drugs to cope with the physical, emotional or psychological effects of family violence, which can lead to increased vulnerability.
Has ever verbalized or had suicidal ideas or tried to commit suicide	Suicidal thoughts or attempts indicate that the victim is extremely vulnerable and the situation has become critical.
Isolation	A victim is more vulnerable if they are isolated from family, friends and other social networks. Isolation also increases the likelihood of violence and is not simply geographical. Other examples of isolation include cultural factors, which may limit a new immigrant's access to social supports; disabilities, which may limit social interaction or support; and/or the perpetrator not allowing the victim to have social interaction.

PERPETRATOR

Risk factor	Explanation
Perpetrator	
Use of weapon in most recent event	Use of a weapon indicates a high level of risk because previous behavior is a likely predictor of future behavior. A weapon is defined as any tool used by the perpetrator which can injure, kill or destroy property, including guns.
Access to weapons	Perpetrators who have access to weapons, particularly guns, are much more likely to seriously injure or kill a victim than others without access to weapons.
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm victim	Psychological and emotional abuse has been found to be a good predictor of continued abuse, including physical abuse. Previous physical assaults also predict future assaults.
Has ever tried to choke the victim	Strangulation or choking is a common method used by male perpetrators to kill female victims.
Has ever threatened to kill victim	Evidence suggests that a perpetrator's threat to kill a victim is often genuine.
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill Children	Evidence suggests that child abuse and family violence are likely to occur in the same family. Children witnessing, hearing or being subjected to violence will be adversely affected and may develop behavioral and emotional problems.
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill other family members	Threats by the perpetrator to hurt or cause actual harm to family members can be a way of controlling the victim through fear.
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill pets or other animals	A correlation between cruelty to animals and family violence is increasingly being recognized. Because there is a direct link between family violence and pets being abused or killed, abuse or threats of abuse pets may be used by perpetrators to control family members.

Risk factor	Explanation
Perpetrator cont'd	
Has ever threatened or tried to commit suicide	Threats or attempts to commit suicide have been found to be a risk factor for murder–suicide.
Stalking of victim	Stalkers are more likely to be violent if they have had an intimate relationship with the victim. Stalking, when coupled with physical assault, is strongly connected to murder or attempted murder. Stalking behavior and obsessive thinking are highly related behaviors.
Sexual assault of victim	Sexual assault includes when the perpetrator has forced the victim to have sex against their will, coerced sexual activity or carried out unwanted sexual touching. Women who report sexual assault are more likely to have a history of family violence.
Previous or current breach of Intervention Order	Breaching Intervention Order conditions indicates the defendant is not willing to abide by the orders of a court. Such behavior should be considered a serious indicator of increased risk of future violence.
Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse	Serious problems with illicit drug, alcohol or prescription drugs and inhalants lead to impairment in social functioning and create a risk of family violence. This includes temporary drug-induced psychosis.
Controlling behaviors	The perpetrator can exercise complete control over the victim's activities by, for example, telling the victim who they can be friends with, controlling how much money the victim can access, and determining when the victim can see friends and family and when the victim can use the car. Men who think they 'should be in charge' are more likely to use various forms of violence against their partner.
Unemployed	Unemployment is associated with an increased risk of lethal assault, and a sudden change in employment status – such as being terminated and/or retrenched – may be associated with increased risk.
Depression/mental health Issue	Murder–suicide outcomes in family violence have been associated with perpetrators who have mental health problems, particularly depression.
History of violent Behavior	Perpetrators with a history of violence are more likely to use violence against family members. This can occur even if the violence has not previously been directed toward family members. Other victims may have included strangers, acquaintances and/or police officers. The nature of the violence may include credible threats or use of weapons, and attempted or actual assaults. Violent men generally engage in more frequent and more severe family violence than perpetrators who do not have a violent past.

Relationship	
Separation	For women who are experiencing family violence, the high risk periods include immediately prior to taking action, and during the initial stages of or immediately after separation. Victims who stay with the perpetrator because they are afraid to leave often accurately anticipate that leaving would increase the risk of lethal assault. The data on 'time-since-separation' suggests that women are particularly at risk within the first two months.
Escalation – increase in severity and/or frequency of violence	Violence occurring more often or becoming worse has been found to be associated with lethal outcomes for victims.
Financial difficulties	Low income (less than that required to provide for basic needs) and financial stress including a gambling addiction are risk factors for family violence.

RISK ASSESSMENT TICK SHEET FOR COMPLETION BY WORKERS OR PARTIES

Risk or vulnerability factor	Presence of factor	
	Yes	No
Victim		
Pregnancy/new birth*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression/ mental health issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever verbalized or had suicidal ideas or tried to commit suicide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perpetrator		
Use of weapon in most recent event*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to weapons*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever tried to choke the victim*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever threatened to kill victim*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill children*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill other family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill pets or other animals*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has ever threatened or tried to commit suicide*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stalking of victim*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault of victim*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Previous or current breach of intervention order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obsession/jealous behavior toward victim*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Controlling behavior*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Depression/mental health issue#	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
History of violent behavior (not family violence)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship		
Recent separation*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Escalation – increase in severity and/or frequency of violence*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* May indicate an increased risk of the victim being killed or almost killed. # Mental health issues such as depression and paranoid psychosis, which focuses on the victim as hostile, are high risk when they are present in conjunction with other risk factors, particularly a previous history of violence. The presence of a mental health issue must be carefully considered in relation to the co-occurrence of other risk