

Name of Tool	Psychopathy Checklist Youth Version (PCL: YV)
Category	Responsivity Issues (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Forth, Kosson and Hare
Year	2003

Description

- The PCL:YV is a 20-item scale designed specifically for the assessment of psychopathic traits in adolescent populations ([Brazil and Forth, 2016](#)).
- The authors maintain that the PCL:YV is a 'downward extension' of the PCL-R tailored to be more applicable to the target population. The PCL-R items pertaining to adults such as 'Parasitic lifestyle,' 'Lack of realistic long-term plans' and 'Many short-term martial relationships' were replaced by items that attempt to capture similar dispositions but in the forms they appear during adolescence in the PCL:YV. The item descriptions and scoring guides for several other items were also modified. For example, 'Juvenile delinquency' and 'Criminal versatility' were also modified, given that adolescents have less contact with the justice system than adults at this stage in their lives (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003).
- Using a semi-structured interview and collateral information, the PCL:YV measures interpersonal, antisocial, affective, and behavioural features related to a widely understood, traditional concept of psychopathy (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003).
- The PCL:YV is suitable for both male and female populations between the ages of 12 and 18 (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003).

Age Appropriateness

12-18

Assessor Qualifications

Similar specifications as with its predecessor, the PCL:R: (1) advanced graduate degree in the social, medical or behavioural sciences; (2) possess appropriate professional credentials; (3) a familiarity with the clinical and research literature pertaining to psychopathy, both in adults and adolescents; (4) experience working with adolescents and/or familiarity with developmental norms; (5) adequate training and experience in using the PCL:YV; (6) avoid using non-standard procedures to administer the PCL:YV. A qualified clinician should supervise assessors who do not have the above qualifications (Hare, 2003).

Individuals can administer the PCL:YV for clinical purposes if they are licensed to conduct psychological assessments and possess an advanced university degree (postgraduate level). Furthermore, it is recommended that assessors establish interrater agreement through training before using the instrument for clinical purposes. Use of the PCL:YV for research purposes only does not require assessors to be licensed professionals ([Brazil and Forth, 2016](#)).

Strengths

- Strong empirical grounding given that the measure draws upon the research of the PCL:R (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003).
- When used in appropriate contexts and by appropriately trained professionals, can be useful in directing future treatment and other interventions ([Brazil and Forth, 2016](#)).

Empirical Grounding



This youth version is a downward extension of the PCL:R, used to assess personality characteristics and elements of psychopathic behaviour (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003).

Inter-Rater Reliability



a) UK Research

- [Dolan and Rennie \(2006\)](#) measured the inter-rater reliability of three researchers. ICCs ranged between .87 to .93.

b) International Research

- [Marsh et al. \(2011\)](#) - excellent correlation coefficient found for PCL:YV scoring ($r = .91$).
- [Cauffman et al. \(2009\)](#) obtained excellent ICC value of .91 for the composite PCL:YV scores.
- [Welsh et al. \(2008\)](#) - excellent ICC value of .84 obtained for the PCL:YV.
- [McCuish et al. \(2019\)](#) excellent ICC was of .92 was found for the PCL:YV total score.

Validation History

General Predictive Accuracy




a) UK Research

- [Dolan and Rennie \(2008\)](#) - poor to moderate ROC values for general recidivism (.60) and violent recidivism (.54).
- [Marshall et al. \(2006\)](#) - large AUCs for the PCL:YV across 3 offending categories: recorded incidents of violence (.73), number of charges and convictions (.73) and assaults (.75).

b) International Research

- [Douglas, Epstein and Poythress \(2008\)](#) - moderate to large AUCs observed for violent (.66) and weapons-related (.88) recidivism. PCL: YV scores did not, however, significantly predict any recidivism or non-violent recidivism.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edens and Cahill (2007) – the PCL: YV did not significantly predict violent and general recidivism in community settings. • Catchpole and Gretton (2004) – the PCL:YV obtained a large AUC value of .73 in predicting violent recidivism. • Corrado et al. (2004) found small to moderate AUC values in predicting any, non-violent and violent recidivism ranging from .58 - .68. • Shepherd and colleagues (2014) applied the PCL:YV to a sample of Australian young offenders over a period of up to 18 months in order to ensure a minimum follow-up of six months. The PCL:YV was found to predict general and violent recidivism generating AUCs of .66 and .64 respectively. • A study of 72 juvenile sex offenders by Wijetunga et al. (2018) tested the predictive validity of the PCL:YV. The AUCs for general nonsexual, violent nonsexual and sexual recidivism were .63, .54 and .77 respectively. The PCL:YV was also found to strongly correlate with Scale P of the JSOAP-II, a youth sexual violence tool with a scale intended to measure psychopathy.
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Validation History	
Applicability: Females	
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bauer, Whitman and Kosson (2011) - Moderate to large correlations observed between total number of charges ($r = .29$), number of violent infractions ($r = .38$) and the total number of infractions ($r = .43$) in a sample of institutionalised female offenders. • Stockdale, Olver and Wong (2010) - moderate to large AUCs found for the original 20-item 4-factor model ranging from .67 to .68 for total recidivism and from .70 to .75 for youth recidivism. It was, however, unable to significantly predict adult recidivism. • Marshall et al. (2006) - satisfactory correlations found between the PCL:YV scores and recidivism in relation to predicted assaults, total charges and reconviction in a group of female offenders.

Validation History

Applicability: Ethnic Minorities



a) UK Research

None available at present.

b) International Research

- [Stockdale, Olver and Wong \(2010\)](#) - moderate to large AUCs found for total recidivism (range = .71 to .72) and youth recidivism (range = .73-.81). Moderate AUC of .63 was found for adult recidivism in a group of Aboriginal offenders.
- [Schmidt et al. \(2006\)](#) - the PCL:YV attained excellent predictive accuracy (ROC) for violent recidivism (.83) and general recidivism (.76). Its accuracy in predicting non-violent recidivism was, however, below chance (.31).
- [McCuish and colleagues \(2018\)](#) tested the predictive validity of the PCL:YV across 137 indigenous and 312 White adjudicated youth. Support was evident for using the PCL:YV across both ethnic groups. The lifestyle and antisocial factors were more informative of recidivism outcomes than interpersonal and affective factors.

Validation History

Applicability: Mental Disorders



a) UK Research

None available at present.

b) International Research

- [Schmidt et al. \(2006\)](#) - the PCL:YV attained moderate predictive accuracy for violent (.71) and general (.72) recidivism in a sample of juvenile offenders who were referred for mental health assessments.

Contribution to Risk Practice

- The PCL:YV provides an assessment of factors related to the construct of psychopathy - some of the factors analyse the individual's past and current offending behaviours. This information can be used to prompt further assessment of identified risk factors and other relevant intervention options.

Other Considerations

- The authors advise that the PCL:YV should not be the sole decision-making measure used to assess risk of recidivism. Its standard error of measurement should also be considered to account for 'false positive' cases where item scores are part of an adolescent development process.

- A cut-off score for clinical diagnosis is not provided, in line with the recommendations of practitioners not to diagnose personality disorders in adolescents.
- Fewer validation studies conducted on UK populations. [Pechorro et al. \(2015\)](#) found the Portuguese version of the PCL:YV demonstrated promising psychometric properties with regards to the three-factor model of youth psychopathy; although further validation work is still required.
- It may be possible to complete the PCL:YV solely using information contained in file records in cases where information provided during the interview with the offender is of little use (Forth, Kosson and Hare, 2003). Such assessments are considered nonstandard assessments.
- Concerns regarding the application of an adult construct to an adolescent population. Controversy regarding the applicability of some psychopathic traits to children and adolescents (e.g. impulsivity, parasitic lifestyle) ([Edens, Petrila and Buffington-Vollum, 2001](#); [Kotler and McMahon, 2010](#)).
- Some researchers argue that general characteristics of adolescence can be mistaken for psychopathic traits ([Edens, 2001](#)).
- [Hemphälä and colleagues \(2015\)](#) found there was moderate to high rank order stability as indicated by correlated with PCL-R ratings five years later (overall $r=.68$ for males and $.58$ for females). Further, excellent intra-individual stability was found with 87% and 86% of males and females respectively exhibiting no reliable changes in PCL scores.
- [Schmidt and colleagues \(2006\)](#) state that caution should be applied when using this tool. The label of psychopathy could be regarded as pejorative and may have negative effects on treatment, legal sentencing and community supervision. It was also suggested that few studies have explored long term and developmental correlates of high scores on the PCL:YV.
- [Dawson and colleagues \(2012\)](#) found that the PCL:YV indicated the presence of serious psychopathy related personality disturbance when it was applied to two incarcerated youth. They suggested that measures like the CAPP-IRS could complement the use of the PCL:YV.
- As noted under the PCL:R, validation research relating PCL:YV scores to recidivism should also be interpreted with caution given that the tool was designed to screen for psychopathic traits rather than assess the likelihood of recidivism.
- For more information, please visit the following website: www.hare.org