

Name of Tool	Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21 V3)
Category	Violence Risk (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	White and Meloy
Year	2016

Description

- The WAVR-21 is the first and only SPJ instrument designed to investigate the risk of workplace and campus-related targeted violence, i.e., lethal situations where an individual enacts violence against a specific target in order to cause as much harm as possible ([Brunt, 2013](#); [Kienlen, n.d.](#)).
- The primary purpose of the WAVR-21 is to examine the risk for homicide; a secondary element to the tool is to assess the risk, frequency and severity of other workplace aggression such as stalking ([Meloy, White and Hart, 2013](#)).
- The WAVR-21 is a 21-item instrument examining violent motives, ideation, intent, weapons skills, pre-attack planning, negative personality traits, mental disorders, situational factors and any protective factors. Items are coded as absent, present, or prominent, with an additional “recent change” determination ([Brunt, 2013](#); [Kienlen, n.d.](#); [Meloy, White and Hart, 2013](#)).
- The WAVR-21 breaks down an individual’s thinking about violence into three categories: motives for violence; homicidal ideas, violent fantasies or preoccupation; violent intentions and expressed threats ([Brunt, 2013](#)).
- The intended users of the tool are qualified mental health professionals with experience of assessing violence risk and knowledgeable about workplace legal issues, or members of multidisciplinary threat assessment teams ([Meloy, White and Hart, 2013](#)).
- The WAVR-21 was first published in 2007; it is now in its third version which came out in 2016 (see [WAVR-21](#) webpage).

Age Appropriateness

18+

Assessor Qualifications

- Using the WAVR-21 requires training, a knowledge of threat assessment literature and risk management principles, and compliance with relevant local and national laws ([Brunt, 2013](#)).
- Printed manuals are available at [specializedtraining.com](#); training opportunities are regularly posted at [wtsglobal.com](#). One and two day trainings are available.

Tool Development

- The existing literature on workplace violence, threat assessment and risk was reviewed to formulate the WAVR-21. It was pertinent that the tool captured both escalation to targeted or intended violence, as well as de-escalation where an individual ultimately decides against the violence they had previously contemplated ([Meloy, White and Hart, 2013](#)).

- Eleven raters assessed 12 cases of workplace threat situations chosen at random. The inter-rater reliability was found to be excellent for two items, fair to good for eleven and poor for eight of them. This may be countered, to some extent, by the fact that the raters having limited experience and no mental health background; the case materials were limited in their quality and quantity. The overall sum of the risk factors generated a good IRR of .67 ([Meloy, White and Hart, 2013](#)). When psychologists alone utilised the WAVR-21, interrater reliability was in the excellent range.
- Scalora, Cawood and Viñas-Racionero (in press) tested the predictive validity of the WAVR-21 using forty cases of violence that had taken place in workplaces and academic institutions. Raters were blind to the known outcomes. Substantial predictive validity was demonstrated with an AUC of .70, showing that final summary risk ratings correlated with physical violence, and correct classification of cases as either violent or nonviolent was comparable to other structured professional judgment instruments.

General Notes

- The focused questions at the end of the WAVR-21 coding sheet allow for further exploration of issues pertinent to threat assessment ([Brunt, 2013](#)). The intake documentation form in the WAVR-21 V3 provides for an initial assessment for prioritising of the case.
- Participants who take part in formal WAVR-21 training are provided with an additional tool, the 'PROTECT' form, used to identify stabilisers against violence risk ([Kienlen, n.d.](#)).
- A digital version of the WAVR-22 V3 is available in two forms: an online tool as part of the Resolver platform ([resolver.com](#)); and licensing as intellectual property by White and Meloy so the WAVR-21 V3 can be formatted according to the wishes of the licensee and used behind a secure firewall.
- Typical users of the WAVR-21 are members of multi-disciplinary threat assessment and management teams or mental health professionals who consult or conduct formal assessments in work or campus settings. Other potential users of the WAVR-21 are workplace violence security consultants, as well as law enforcement professionals who assist the organisations in their communities (see [WAVR-21](#) webpage).
- Further details about the tool can be found here: <https://www.wavr21.com/>