Name of Tool	Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide Version 3 (SARAV3)
Category	Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Kropp and Colleagues
Year	2015

Description

- The SARA is a 24-item structured guide for spousal risk evaluations in individuals who are suspected of, or who are being treated for, spousal abuse. Eight items describe the nature of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in terms of the diversity, chronicity and escalation of behaviours as well as supervision violations. Ten items are coded on the perpetrator's issues with social, interpersonal and psychological adjustments. Six items describe vulnerabilities that could interfere with a victim's ability, opportunity or motivation to engage in self-protective behaviour (Kropp and Hart, 2015).
- The SARA helps characterise the risk an individual poses to his spouse, children, another family member, or any other person involved in terms of likelihood, imminence and severity. The instrument does not use actuarial or statistical methods to support decision-making about risk; it is a structural professional judgment method offering guidelines for collecting relevant information and making decisions (Messing and Thaller, 2015).
- Access to clinical records (if applicable) and criminal justice case files are required. It is also necessary for the perpetrator and victim to take part in interviews (Messing and Thaller, 2015).
- In Step 1, evaluators gather and document basic case information. In the second step, they identify the presence of 24 factors across the three domains (nature of IPV, perpetrator factors and victim vulnerabilities). In Step 3, evaluators assess the relevance of factors in relation to the perpetration or prevention of future IPV. In the fourth step, evaluators describe the most likely scenarios of future IPV. In Step 5, evaluators recommend ways to manage IPV risk considering the factors and scenarios identified. In the sixth and final step, evaluators document their judgment regarding the overall level of risk (Kropp and Hart, 2015).

Age Appropriateness

18+

Kropp and Hart (2015) suggest that the SARAV3 may be of assistance for evaluating adolescents aged between 15 to 18 years; however, research relating to its effectiveness with this age group is limited.

Assessor Qualifications

Assessors are intended to have advanced training (Messing and Thaller, 2013) and experience with the victims or perpetrators of IPV (Kropp and Hart, 2015). Assessors should also keep abreast with updates in research relating to IPV (Kropp and Hart, 2015).

Strengths

• A discretionary clinical over-ride is available for situations that are not captured by the risk factors found in the tool.
• Can be used with males and females, regardless of sexual orientation or culture (Kropp and Hart, 2015), as well as mentally disordered individuals (Wong and Gordon, 1999).
• The SARA has been used internationally in Australia, the United Kingdom, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, Hong Kong and Singapore (Messing and Thaller, 2013).
• A third version of the tool was developed to include updates to the empirical literature on IPV risk assessment. Version 3 of the SARA has addressed problems from the earlier version raised in feedback from users of the tool: the critical item ratings have been eliminated; three items referring to the supervision violations have been combined into one risk factor; clearer and more consistent definitions of past and recent are used. Vulnerability factors reflecting barriers to a victim's ability, opportunity or motivation to engage in self-protective behaviour have been included to help develop safety plans (Kropp and Hart, 2015).

Empirical Grounding

• The original version of the SARA is based on empirical and clinical literatures. Also covers static and dynamic factors drawn partly from the HCR-20. Developments in the literature since the original SARA was published have been included in the third version of the tool.
• The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment is a set of guidelines based on the structured professional judgement approach to risk assessment and it is designed to ensure that appropriate risk assessment is conducted for domestic violence. It consists of 20 items that have been identified from the literature as being of relevance to the likelihood of future domestic violence offending. Version 3 of the tool reflects advancements in IPV risk assessment technology and risk factors, particularly the importance of victim vulnerability (Kropp and Hart, 2015).
• A broad definition of IPV is used, extending to violence in any intimate (i.e. sexual, romantic) relationship regardless of legal status or the gender of people involved. Violence in this context refers to actual, attempted or threatened physical harm (Kropp and Hart, 2015).

Inter-Rater Reliability

a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	All of the research at present relates to previous versions of the SARA. Research on SARA^V3 will be added as it becomes available. • Belfrage et al. (2012) found low to moderate reliability of the ratings between the first and second contact with police for three of the items within the SARA ranging from .56 to .68. • Grann and Wedin (2002) found an excellent ICC value for the original SARA of .85 in a sample of 18 cases. Inter-rater reliability was lower for part 1 ('assessing general

	violence) scores and part 2 ('assessing spousal support') scores (.74 and .88 respectively). •Nicholls et al (2013): "The [original] SARA research reports nine AUCs ranging from 0.52-0.65. The interrater reliability (IRR) for the SARA was excellent for total scores, good for the summary risk ratings, and poor for the critical items."

Validation History

General Predictive Accuracy	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ☐ ☐ ☐
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	All of the research at present relates to previous versions of the SARA. Research on SARA^{V3} will be added as it becomes available. •Llor-Esteban et al. (2016) used the factors from the original version of the SARA as used in a Spanish population to classify men sentenced for IPV into groups ranked by high, medium and low risk. •Belfrage et al. (2012) - in an 18-month follow-up, the SARA^{V2} had moderate predictive accuracy (AUC = .63). Higher numerical scores on the SARA were associated with recidivism. •Helmus and Bourgon (2011) - previous studies relating to the original SARA found low to high accuracy between composite scores and intimate partner violence (IPV) recidivism (AUC = .59 - .77) and violent recidivism (AUC = .58 - .64). Similar predictive accuracy was found for the summary risk ratings and IPV (AUC =.56 - .87) and violent recidivism (AUC = .55 - .66). •Grann and Wedin (2002) - findings suggest marginal predictive ability for recidivism in the original SARA with AUCs ranging between .49 to .52 at the 6 month follow-up period. •Olver and Jung (2017) found that SARA scores showed incremental validity and the psychological adjustment domain of SARA contributed to the prediction of IPV. •Jung and Buro (2017) tested a modified version of the SARA (consisting of 14 items) on 246 male perpetrators charged for IPV offences. Moderate predictive accuracy

	was shown for predicting IPV behaviours: post-index IPV charges and IPV convictions generated AUCs of .68 and .74 respectively. • Messing and Thaller (2013) reported an AUC of .628 and a K-score of 6 in the original SARA.

Validation History

Applicability: Females

a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	• In a study that included 43 females who had offended, the instrument was found to work equally well across genders. A correlation level of 37 (significant at the .005 level) was found with females using the SARA. It was found to have a greater ability to predict risk than other risk assessment tools (e.g. Domestic Violence Screening Inventory) (Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Planning, Policy and Evaluation, 2011).

Validation History

Applicability: Ethnic Minorities

No evidence available at present.

Validation History

Applicability: Mental Disorders

No empirical evidence available at present.

SARA^{V3} contains a question about the presence of major mental disorders.

Contribution to Risk Practice

• The SARA has the ability to create an awareness of risk factors pertinent to the individual's risk of reoffending.
• The SARA can aid assessors in identifying risks and responsivity factors specific to the individual (e.g. criminal lifestyle, presence of mental health problems).
• The dynamic factors included in the SARA can contribute to the determination of the level of monitoring / rehabilitative efforts required.

- The SARA can aid assessors in developing risk formulations and risk management strategies.
- The original SARA and the Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk (B-SAFER) are consistently cited in the literature (Campbell et al., 2003; Vitacco et al., 2012; Williams and Houghton, 2004) as credible tools for assessing risk of violence and establishing a prevention plan. While no instrument or process can perfectly predict the risk for intimate partner violence, these instruments provide a systematic way to assess risk for violence and re-offense (Wilson and Goss, 2013).
- Since the SARA was said to be more 'user-friendly' and 'adaptable' than other risk assessment tools, it was adapted for use in South Africa (Londt, 2014).
- Consideration should be given as to whether to use other SPJ tools in conjunction with the SARA. If there is a history of physical assault outside of intimate relationships, the evaluator should consider using the Historical Clinical Risk-20 Version 3 (HCR-20^{V3}). For IPV cases involving sexual assault where the perpetrator has a history of sexual violence outside of intimate relationships, using the Risk for Sexual Violence Protocol (RSVP) should be considered. In cases where there is long-term targeting of a victim following the end of a relationship, the evaluator should consider using the Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM) (Kropp and Hart, 2015).

Other Considerations

- SARA's validity is dependent on well-trained professionals who possess the assessment skills needed to classify and identify individuals who have committed intimate partner offences that have apparent and known DV-risk factors.
- The SARA does not assess relationship status.
- Observed fluctuation in inter-rater reliabilities could be due to the fact that the SARA is not an actuarial measure. Moreover, the previous studies may have used incomplete records to score the SARA.
- The developers of the SARA caution that if no information is available about a particular factor then this should be left uncoded (i.e. omitted from the assessment). When items are omitted, evaluators should take note of this and qualify their judgments accordingly, considering how their opinions may have changed if those item(s) had been completed (Kropp and Hart, 2015).
- To address the time constraints of SARA, Kropp, Hart and Belfrage (2005) developed a shortened version of the SARA, the Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk (B-SAFER). Much of the new literature about IPV risk assessment has been incorporated into the B-SAFER (Kropp and Hart, 2015). There is a separate RATED entry for this tool.