

Name of Tool	Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk Version 2 (B-SAFER)
Category	Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Kropp and Hart
Year	2010

Description

- The B-SAFER is a 10-item structured guide for the assessment and management of risk in adult males and females with a history of intimate partner violence (IPV).
- The items contained within the instrument are divided into two main sections: participant's history of intimate partner violence (Section 1) and the participant's psychological and social functioning (Section 2). A third domain was added in the Second Version of the tool in 2010 called 'Victim Vulnerability' factors containing five risk factors relating to the victim (e.g. unsafe living situation and inadequate access to resources) ([Storey and Strand, 2012](#); [Svalin, 2018](#)).
- The instrument does not apply cut-off scores to determine the nature or degree of risk posed by an individuals. It requires users to consider the risk to intimate partners if no intervention was taken, with risk rated as low, moderate or high ([Kropp and Hart, 2004](#)).
- The instrument is appropriate for use with male and females aged 18 years and older.
- This was developed to help police make risk management decisions. The authors developed this tool in 2005 due to the fact that "the SARA may not be the optimal tool for use by police because it is relatively long and requires specific judgments about mental health, such as personality disorder" ([Kropp and Hart, 2004](#)).

Age Appropriateness

18+

Assessor Qualifications

Assessors should meet the following minimal qualifications:

- Training and experience in individual domestic violence assessments
- Expertise in the area of violence against women in relationships
 - Users should have relevant knowledge, training and experience in individual assessment with perpetrators and victims of spousal assault and intimate partner violence.
 - An assessor is required to make a judgment relating to a psychiatric diagnosis on two occasions: the presence of a mental health disorder and a substance use problem ([Kropp, Hart and Belfrage, 2005](#)).
 - Requires victim interview.

Strengths

• It takes less time to complete making it less resource-intensive. It also has removed some of the technical jargon from SARA relating to mental disorder ([Kropp and Hart, 2004](#); [Storey and Strand, 2012](#)).

Empirical Grounding



This tool was derived from the SARA and is grounded in professional and scientific literature on spousal violence ([Kropp and Hart, 2004](#)).

Inter-Rater Reliability



a) UK Research

None available at present.

b) International Research

- [Slavin et al. \(2017\)](#) tested the second version of the B-SAFER with three police employees conducting 23 pairwise B-SAFER assessments. The lowest level of inter-rater agreement was for intimate relationship problems and mental disorders. It was at its highest level for violations of court orders. Inter-rater reliability was satisfactory for assessments of violent threats and thoughts and fair for item 3 'escalation.' The decision was made not to speak to victims as part of this assessment, suggesting that the information gleaned from victim interviews is pivotal to the B-SAFER risk assessment process. The authors believe that this missing information likely contributed to the lower inter-rater agreement on certain items and the missing values rate.
- [Thijssen and Ruiters \(2011\)](#) - using four of the ten items presented in the original B-SAFER, the authors found poor to moderate inter-rater reliability (ICC), ranging from .21 ('Mental health Problems') to .74 ('General Criminality'). The authors attribute poor reliability to insufficient information contained within the client's files. The items with good inter-rated reliability were violent acts, general criminality and substance use problems.
- [Au et al. \(2008\)](#) - men with histories of IPV scored significantly higher ratings on the original B-SAFER than men with no history. B-SAFER correctly classified 95% of the sample.
- [Kropp and Hart \(2004\)](#) - Inter-rater reliability in the first version of the B-SAFER was claimed to be 'excellent.' As the study utilised qualitative analysis, however, there is no statistical score.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfrage and Strand (2012) found that practice in Stockholm of targeting resources at high risk cases affected predictive results for recidivism.
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Validation History

General Predictive Accuracy	
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a) UK Research	None available at present.
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b) International Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storey et al. (2014) examined the use of the second version of the tool by Swedish police officers in assessing 249 IPV cases. It was found that police officers' ratings of risk made by the tool predicted recidivism rates. The authors suggested that the B-SAFER may be better-suited to police officers. • A study by Loinaz (2014) found that the original B-SAFER score predicted recidivism with an AUC of .76. ROC analyses found that the tool's predictive validity was 70%. The authors cautioned that there are still some uncertainties with the tool, for there are a high number of false positives in the sample. They surmise that this may be related to the follow-up period of 40 release cases for 15 months. • Au et al. (2008) assessed the original B-SAFER for IPV offending in Hong Kong. It was found that it had good 'concurrent validity,' with scores being able to measure the instances of IPV. The 'construct validity' of the tool in terms of its ability to classify IPV perpetrators from non-perpetrators was also found to be strong. • Gerbrandij et al. (2018) tested the second version of the B-SAFER on a sample of 158 low-risk individuals. Weak, non-significant predictive validity was found for both violent and stalking reoffending when considered in isolation. The B-SAFER item 'violations of course orders' was a consistent predictor for stalking reoffending but not violence. • A doctoral thesis found that item 6 'General Criminality' on the B-SAFER was most strongly correlated with the severity of repeat violence and the likelihood of repeat IPV incidents in the current situation. Item 7 'Intimate Relationship Problems' also strongly correlated with repeated intimate partner violence episodes (Svalin, 2018).
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Validation History	
Applicability: Females	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #4a4a8a;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #4a4a8a;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #4a4a8a;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> </div>
<p>Authors state that the tool can be used with all adults who have committed IPV “regardless of gender or sexual orientation” (Kropp, Hart and Belfrage, 2005: 71).</p>	
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storey and Strand (2012) carried out a study involving police officers’ assessment of 52 women in Sweden and compared and contrasted the use of the original version of the B-SAFER with a previous study (Belfrage and Strand, 2008) that focused on male perpetrators. The results showed that the total B-SAFER scores were higher for men and that females were rated as being higher risk based on fewer risk factors. The authors hypothesise that the police officers may have considered additional risk factors to those on the B-SAFER, given the lower number of risk factors present within female perpetrators. This suggests that the B-SAFER may be insufficient for assessing the risk of IPV in female perpetrators.

Validation History	
Applicability: Ethnic Minorities	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> </div>
<p>No evidence available at present.</p>	

Validation History	
Applicability: Mental Disorders	<div style="display: flex; gap: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> </div>
<p>No evidence available at present.</p>	

Contribution to Risk Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian Association of Threat Assessment Professions recommends that in cases where the B-SAFER is used (e.g. due to time constraints), the SARA tool should thereafter be utilised to gain a more in-depth assessment of IPV cases. The inclusion of victim vulnerability factors in addition to those relating to the perpetrator in the second version of the B-SAFER was noteworthy (Kropp and Hart, 2015). • In some European countries, the B-SAFER is known as the Police Version of the SARA (SARA-PV) (Kropp and Hart, 2015). • Storey et al. (2014) maintained that B-SAFER may be better-suited to police usage than other tools such as SARA.

- Comparing antisocial (n=341) with family-only (n=316) perpetrators showed that the antisocial ones displayed significantly more risk factors on the B-SAFER. In particular, violent thoughts or threats as well as escalations of violent and threatful behaviour were linked to an increased risk for acute and severe or deadly intimate partner violence ([Petersson, Strand and Selenius, 2016](#)).

Other Considerations

- The B-SAFER is more focused on martial relationships than other types of intimate partner relationships ([Echeburúa et al., 2009](#)). Intimate relationship problems in the B-SAFER refer to failures to maintain an intimate partner relationship that is stable in nature (i.e. free from conflict and/or separations) ([Petersson, Strand and Selenius, 2016](#)).
- The tool has shown to be useful in differentiating sub-types of those who have offended (non-pathological and antisocial pathological), classifying 79% of the sample correctly ([Loinaz, 2014](#)).
- [Slavin et al. \(2017\)](#) suggested that the best way to use this tool would be to educate police officers on personality and mental health factors, since psychiatric disorders have been strongly linked to lethal IPV cases.
- Future research should focus on the applicability of the tool to female perpetrators of IPV, including additional risk factors to determine whether this may be more suitable to managing women who have committed IPV ([Storey and Strand, 2012](#)).
- A study by [Nesset et al. \(2017\)](#) looked at use of the tool during emergency visits by the police in potential IPV cases. Six out of the 15 items on the second version of the B-SAFER tool were used as a basis for decision-making about which actions to take: arresting the perpetrator and/or relocating the victim; no further action. It appeared that physical violence and substance abuse problems increased the odds of arrest; whilst mental health problems and the presence of children at the scene made it more likely that victims would be relocated. The authors maintained that the B-SAFER enabled police to gather data and make decisions about how to manage the case in 'real time.' Results from research suggest that the inclusion of a victim interview should strengthen the accuracy of the tool.
- Assessors using the B-SAFER are required to assess the risk of future intimate partner violence looking at different potential scenarios. This scenario is not as well-developed as it is in SARAV³. It is surmised that this is related to a lack of reasoning about the situational aspects in relation to global risk. It is, therefore, recommended that greater weight is ascribed to situational factors in global risk assessments ([Svalin, 2018](#)).