

Name of Tool	Dynamic Risk Assessment and Management System (DRAMS)
Category	Responsivity Issues (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Lindsay and Colleagues
Year	2004

Description

- The DRAMS is a 10-item risk assessment tool composed of proximal/dynamic risk factors for use with those diagnosed with learning disabilities.
- It is used to assess the immediate risk of offending posed by the service user within secure settings. Given its dynamic nature, it should be completed at regular intervals.
- The tool can be completed with the client.
- It was originally designed to be used in conjunction with positive behavioural programmes implemented within secure settings. It assesses a number of proximal and dynamic risk variables, such as mood, self-regulation, anti-social behaviour and compliance with routine.
- Every item has been arranged along a continuum from no problem to serious problem. Furthermore, a 'traffic light analogy' replaces the traditional Likert scale with red for association with risk, amber for intermediate and green for least problematic ([Gaskin, 2007](#)).
- During periods where the DRAMS indicates low risk, normal day-to-day programmes in which the client engages can be implemented as usual. Conversely, if high dynamic risk is identified by the tool, such programmes can be suspended.

Age Appropriateness

No specific age range.

Assessor Qualifications

Assessors should have the relevant training and experience in administering and interpreting risk assessments in relation to individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities who have offended.

Tool Development

- The DRAMS was developed by staff from The State Hospital in Scotland to be an instrument that could be easily understood and hence used by clients with IDs. Factors were developed based on literature from proximal/dynamic risk ([Gaskin, 2007](#)).
- Although the measure was developed in relation to positive behavioural programmes, the measure can also be used with any therapeutic, educational, management or occupational regime, if deemed appropriate by clinicians ([Lindsay et al., 2004](#)).
- The DRAMS can be scored by item, category and as a total score. The tool was intended to be used as part of a comprehensive approach to risk assessment and is best used idiomatically with individual clients ([Lindsay et al., 2004](#)).

- [Steptoe et al. \(2008\)](#) – the DRAMS had moderate inter-rater reliability ($r_s = .46$). The composite score achieved predictive accuracy in relation to violent incidents perpetrated in secure settings (AUC = .73).
- [Lindsay et al. \(2004\)](#) - initial validation of the measure demonstrated high reliability for the composite score and moderate to high reliability for nine of the ten items presented in the measure. One item ('therapeutic alliance') retained poor reliability scores.
- [Lindsay and colleagues \(2017\)](#) tested the predictive accuracy of the DRAMS in a sample of 30 male participants. AUCs ranged from .52-.87; although the total scores score generated an AUC of .86.

General Notes

- It appears that DRAMS is effective across a range of settings ([Lindsay et al., 2017](#)). It is noteworthy that studies have found differences in the items that are statistically significant predictors of future incidents. For instance, [Lindsay et al. \(2017\)](#) found that substance abuse and clinical items were significant predictors, likely due to the sample involving participants in the community where there is less regulations in place than in secure facilities.