

Name of Tool	Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG)
Category	Violence Risk (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Cook, Hart and Kropp
Year	2013

Description

- The Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG) is a 16-item Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) approach to assessing risk of group-based violence (GBV). This encompasses any violence by an individual who is aligned with, or a member of, a group. It includes terrorism as well as violence associated with gangs, organised crime, and cults. This may include lone actors who identify with, but are not a member of, a group ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).
- The tool lists 16 risk factors categorised into four domains in a nested model: individual, individual-group, group, and group-societal. These are rated for presence (Yes, Partial, or No) and relevance (Low, Medium, or High), and used to develop a formulation that includes scenarios and risk opinions that then inform case management. The tool does not include protective factors, but assessors should consider and include individualised protective factors in their formulation ([Logan & Lloyd, 2015](#); [Cook et al., 2019](#)).
- Rather than risk bandings, the output is a formulation that should communicate opinions on Future Violence/Case Prioritisation, Serious Physical Harm, and Imminent Violence ([Hart et al., 2017](#); [RTI International, 2017](#)).
- An interview with the individual is encouraged, but not required. Assessors use evidence such as mental health records, corrections records, security information and intelligence, and any additional information that may be relevant ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).
- Assessments should be completed in a team, with at least one member who is a Subject Matter Expert of the group the individual is affiliated with ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).
- Individuals should be reassessed as required, with a maximum of 12 months between assessments ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).

Age Appropriateness

14+ ([Cook et al., 2019](#))

Assessor Qualifications

- The tool can be used by professionals in mental health, criminal justice, or security services working with individuals who are at risk or involved in group-based violence. There is no standardised training for the MLG ([Cook et al., 2019](#); [Hart et al., 2017](#))

Tool Development

- MLG was developed from a literature review of group-based violence, as well as feedback from experienced threat analysts ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).

- The risk factors in the Individual domain are modelled after HCR-20 V3 factors ([Hart et al., 2017](#)).
- In a doctoral thesis, [Cook \(2014\)](#) examined the utility and inter-rater reliability of the first version of the MLG with a sample (n = 42) of assessors across 11 GBV cases. Inter-rater reliability was tested for individual items (ICCs ranged from poor to excellent), domains (fair to excellent), and conclusory opinions (good to excellent). Ratings for individual items, domains, and conclusory opinions spanned all possible rating options, indicating the tool can communicate various levels of risk ([Cook, 2014](#)). The MLG subsequently underwent a revision, where four risk factors were removed ([Hart et al., 2017](#)).
- [Cook \(2014\)](#)'s doctoral thesis states that the tool has face- and content validity, as well as practical utility, after evaluating assessors' confidence and knowledge gains following training and practice in using the tool.
- [Hart et al. \(2017\)](#) examined inter-rater reliability for individual items (presence and relevance) and domains. While there was variation, the average was in the "excellent" range. Summary risk ratings were more varied: inter-rater reliability regarding future violence was in the "good" range, while ratings for Serious Physical Harm and for Imminent Violence were in the "fair" range.
- [Hart et al. \(2017\)](#) demonstrated concurrent validity in overall risk ratings between the MLG and the HCR-20, concluding that those at risk of GBV would also be identified as at risk of general violence. The developers caution that this does not indicate the reverse, and that those at risk of general violence cannot be assumed to be at risk of GBV.

General Notes

- The tool is in use in North America and Europe ([Cook et al., 2019](#)).
- The tool can be used in pre- or post-crime scenarios. It is intended for use with those at risk of committing GBV as well as those who are suspected of or known to have engaged in GBV ([Hart et al., 2017](#)).
- A group of experts summarised the strengths and limitations of the tool. Strengths included:
 - the tool's empirical grounding that included input from subject matter experts and live practice with the tool;
 - the tool situates the individual in a social- and societal/political context;
 - the tool can be used for various types of group-based violence; and
 - the tool demonstrated good inter-rater reliability in its development.
- Limitations included:
 - the individual level factors possibly being too general for a detailed assessment of terrorist risk;
 - the potential to miss relevant pathway offences that do not reach the threshold of terrorist violence; and
 - the need for assessors to be experienced in risk assessment, as the framework is described as "lean" ([Lloyd, 2019, p. 32](#)).
- The MLG is open-access and available to purchase without attending a standardised training course. Cook, Hart and Kropp hold the copyright for the MLG in Canada ([Hart et al., 2017](#)).