

Name of Tool	Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM)
Category	Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking (Awaiting Validation)
Author / Publisher	Kropp, Hart and Lyon
Year	2008

### Description

- The first structured risk assessment tool for stalkers, the SAM is designed to provide a systematic, standardised and practical framework for evaluating and managing risk in stalkers.
- The 30 factors contained within SAM are divided into 3 domains: (1) Nature of Stalking, (2) Perpetrator Risk, and (3) Victim Vulnerability. The rationale behind this is to understand the motivations and seriousness of the stalking behaviour, as well as which type of stalker the perpetrator may be ([McEwan et al., 2018](#); [Storey, Hart and Lim, 2017](#)). Assessors are encouraged to thereafter consider the various risk scenarios that may unfold in relation to nature, severity, imminence and frequency/duration ([Belfrage and Strand, 2007](#)).
- The instrument is not actuarial in nature and does not feature fixed scores or cut-offs; overall ratings of low, medium and high are based on professional judgment.

### Age Appropriateness

18+

### Assessor Qualifications

The SAM is intended for use by criminal justice, security, and mental health professionals working in a variety of contexts where complaints of stalking arise.

Assessors are required to attend the relevant training course of around 20 hours. Case studies are included in the training.

### Tool Development

- This tool has undergone extensive pilot testing in Canadian and Swedish police sectors and mental health settings ([Kropp, Hart and Lyon, 2008](#)).
- The SAM builds on previous work on structured professional judgement approaches to violence risk assessment, which include the SARA guide and the RSVP. It offers a structured way to assess the vulnerability of the stalking victim ([Storey, Hart and Lim, 2017](#)).
- [Belfrage and Strand \(2007\)](#) found there to be a strong correlation between factors included in the SAM and the degree of risk: the more factors coded, the higher the risk for repeat stalking episodes.
- [Storey et al. \(2011\)](#) - the SAM obtained average Kappa coefficients of .95 (range between .79 to .91).
- [Storey et al. \(2009\)](#) - the SAM obtained high intra-class reliability values for the following; 'nature of stalking' subscale (.87), perpetrator risk factors (.81) and victim vulnerability scale (.77).

- [Kropp et al. \(2011\)](#) - the instrument has good concurrent validity with other known risk assessments such as the VRAG and the PCL:SV. Their study also indicated fair to good inter-rater reliability.
- [Foellmi et al. \(2016\)](#) assessed 89 stalking perpetrators over a follow-up period of two and a half years. The total and subscale scores were shown to predict recidivism; although the clinical risk ratings did not significantly do so. Inter-rater reliability on the total score, nature and perpetrator subscales were found to be moderate, with ICC2 scores of .77, .64 and .88 respectively.
- [Gerbrandij et al. \(2018\)](#) tested the utility of the SAM on 158 low risk individuals. It was discovered that the SAM had weak, non-significant predictive validity for stalking and violent recidivism. The items measuring distress and violations of supervision on the SAM were found to be a consistent predictor for stalking reoffences, but not violent reoffending, suggesting the tool may be better suited to predicting stalking rather than violence.
- The SAM was completed for 146 adult stalkers in a study by [Shea et al. \(2018\)](#). Case prioritization and risk for continued stalking items were shown to discriminate between high-risk and low-risk stalkers, with AUCs of .69 and .76. The total lifetime SAM scores also demonstrated moderate to good discrimination, with an AUC of .70.
- Inter-rater reliability of 39 cases was shown to initially be poor, due to confusion about what was meant by 'stalking currency' time frame, which could last from 'several days' to 'many year.' To resolve this issue, a consensus definition was adopted of a fixed timeframe of six months. This generated fair to moderate inter-rater reliability for case prioritization (ICC=.77), future stalking (ICC=0.66) and serious physical harm (ICC=0.50) ([Shea et al., 2018](#)).

#### General Notes

- Risk assessment in stalking is still very much in its early stages ([Binder, 2006](#)).
- The SAM can aid assessors in developing risk formulations and risk management strategies. The ability to note 'other considerations' within the SAM allows for unusual risk factors to be taken into account to allow for a fuller consideration of the risk posed ([Belfrage and Strand, 2007](#)).
- The SAM does not consider the perpetrator's amenability or access to treatment options. The focus is on the stalking behaviour, as well as assessing the perpetrator's motivations and the vulnerability of the victim ([Foellmi et al., 2016](#)).
- [Storey et al. \(2009\)](#) found an overlap between psychopathic traits on the PCL:SV and stalking behaviours captured on the SAM. It was suggested that the 'coldness' and 'boldness' present in stalkers had the potential to indicate psychopathy.