

Name of Tool	Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)
Category	Youth Assessment: General Risk (Validated)
Author / Publisher	Orbis Partners Inc.
Year	2007

Description

- The YASI includes both pre-screen and full assessment components and is used to assist in making initial service decisions as well as case plan development. Youth are rated as low, medium or high risk to reoffend.
- YASI provides a graphic profile of risk, need, and strength results for each youth including overall static and dynamic scores on risk and protective factors. These items are spread across 10 domains: legal history, family, school, community and peers, alcohol and drugs, mental health, aggression, prosocial and antisocial attitudes, social and cognitive skills and employment/free time.
- The instrument is used in a variety of juvenile justice settings with both males and females. A special version of the instrument is available for high risk youth serving custody sentences for serious offenses.
- YASI is completed by juvenile justice case workers after a file review, interview with the youth and family (where possible), and consultation with other relevant collateral sources.
- The full YASI assessment consists of 90 items spread across 10 subscales. It takes between 30 to 60 minutes to administer.
- The screening version of the tool ('pre-screen') contains 31 items, and is used to identify moderate to high risk youth who require more extensive assessment using the Full Assessment. This takes around 20 to 40 minutes to complete.
- The suggested interview questions are tailored towards the young person being assessed; although these can be adapted for an interview with their parents or to suit the particular circumstances of the young person ([Baird et al., 2013](#)).

Age Appropriateness

12-18

Assessor Qualifications

Assessors must undertake the necessary training in order to administer this tool.

Strengths

- The tool includes items pertaining to mental health, including adverse childhood experiences.
- Also included are evaluation of strengths, which are assigned numerical weights.
- The YASI has been modified for local legal terminology and used with youth in Scotland.
- A pre-screen version is available for planning and triage purposes, with a pre-screen risk score totalled from 33 items ([Scott, Brown and Skilling, 2019](#)).

• Although the YASI is primarily grounded in gender-neutral literature, it features a number of gender-responsive items extrapolated from feminist literature ([Jones et al., 2016](#); [Scott, Brown and Skilling, 2019](#)).

Empirical Grounding



• The YASI is predominantly grounded in the General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning Theory (GPCSL), with eight central factors based on social learning and self-control theory. Nine out of ten of the YASI’s global subdomains pertain to the Central Eight ([Scott, Brown and Skilling, 2019](#)). The YASI is a modified version of the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA; Barnoski, 2004). [Jones et al. \(2015\)](#) states that the quantitative inclusion of strengths is apt to enhance the functions of prediction and case management. Moreover, it is claimed that the identification of a buffering effect of strengths on risk supports a critical elements of the overall YASI assessment model.

Inter-Rater Reliability



a) UK Research

None available at present.

b) International Research

- As reported in Orbis Partners Inc.’s (2018) evaluation of existing research, an inter-rater reliability study was conducted with 76 raters across ten case studies. The scoring agreement amongst juvenile probation staff was 85%; whilst raters of agreement between staff and expert raters was around 80%.
- With a sample of 1919 juveniles on probation, [Baird et al. \(2013\)](#) found an average scoring agreement among 76 probation staff raters approaching .89.
- [Scott, Brown and Skilling \(2019\)](#) applied the YASI to 254 justice-involved youth (148 males, 106 females). Using a subsample of twenty cases, good or excellent IRR was generated for each subdomain of the YASI.

Validation History

General Predictive Accuracy



a) UK Research

None available at present.

b) International Research

- Over a two year period in New York State, an AUC of .65 was found by Orbis Partners in 2007.
- In Illinois, over a one year period, Orbis Partners (2007) found AUCs of .65.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baird et al. (2013) reported an AUC of .68 for predictive validity. • In Alberta (Canada), an AUC of .79 was reported. The high predictive risk and strength domains were Legal History (AUC Risk .73), Community and Peers (AUC Risk .72, AUC Strength .67) and Attitudes (AUC Risk .69, AUC Strength .69) (Jones, 2013; Jones et al., 2014). • Orbis Partners Inc. (2018) reported that a new YASI validation study was carried out in Milwaukee County on 2712 youth. An AUC value of 0.76 was achieved and this increased as follow-up extended from 12 to 36 months. Predictive accuracy was also evident for girls and boys, those aged under 12 years old and different ethnic groups. • Looking at a sample of 254 youth from Ontario, it was found that the YASI pre-screen yielded an AUC value for the risk total of .65; whilst the total protective score was .55. In terms of the full YASI assessment, the total score, total risk score and total protective scores generated AUCs of .66, .65 and .64 respectively (Scott, Brown and Skilling, 2019).
--	---

Validation History


Applicability: Females




In 2007, Orbis Partners developed YASI-G as a response to the assessment needs of young females. This consists of items extrapolated from feminist and gender-responsive literature about female criminality: nature of one’s relationships, level of emotional expression, self-efficacy, sexual vulnerability, early parenthood and potential mental health issues ([Jones et al., 2016](#)). [Scott, Brown and Skilling \(2019\)](#) suggested that its inclusion of gender neutral and gender-responsive items means the YASI may be a particularly good choice for use with justice-involved females.

a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicated that juvenile females were being over-classified by YASI Pre-Screen scores in that high risk girls exhibited lower recidivism than high-risk boys (Orbis Partners Inc., 2007). • After the initial data indicated that females were being over-classified (in that high risk girls were generated a lower recidivism rate than high risk boys), separate cut-off points were devised to address the gender scoring differences (Baird et al., 2013).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jones et al. (2016) found there was a moderate degree of predictive accuracy in predicting general reoffending for girls with an AUC of .68 compared to the high levels of accuracy for males yielding an AUC of .82. • AUC's of .78 and .76 for girls and boys respectively in the Milwaukee County study (Orbis Partners Inc., 2018). • A study compared the results of the YASI on 148 males with 106 females in Canada. Results indicated that the pre-screen yielded higher predictive accuracy for males. The risk total and total protective scores were .68 and .61 for males and .62 and .52 for females. For the full assessment, moderate effects were observed for males. The total score, total risk score and total protective score were .70, .69 and .69 respectively for males. This is in comparison to .64, .62 and .62 for total, total risk and total protective scores or females (Scott, Brown and Skilling, 2019).
--	--

Validation History	
Applicability: Ethnic Minorities	
a) UK Research	None available at present.
b) International Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher score was found for Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal individuals in Alberta Canada (Jones et al. 2014). • When using the YASI, Baird et al. (2013) found there was moderate discrimination between Whites and Blacks/African Americans. The recidivism rate, however, was only 2.7% higher for high risk Whites than moderate risk Blacks. • Robinson and Jones (2017) found that predictive accuracy levels were similar across various ethnic groups, with an AUC of .76 for African-Americans, .79 for Caucasians and .73 for Hispanic.

Validation History	
Applicability: Mental Disorders	
No empirical evidence at present.	

Contribution to Risk Practice

- Assessment and re-assessment over a short period (up to six months) has shown risk levels relate to the presence/absence of protective factors.
- The modification of case plans is supported by the use of YASI in monitoring supervision progress.
- Developing an understanding of strengths is appropriate to assessment and service.

Other Considerations

- A separate version of the instrument – (CA-YASI) – has been developed and contains more items. It is geared toward more violent youth and is used with up to 25 years old. For this version, Skeem et al. (2012) reported ICC scores between .51 to .72 from field staff across different sites in California. The original CA version was replaced in 2017 with a streamlined CA-YASI to help increase reliability and reduce the number of assessment items and is now being used with other high-risk custody populations.
- [Scott, Brown and Skilling \(2019\)](#) found the YASI had strong convergent validity with the YLS/CMI.