

Introduction to Risk-Need-Responsivity and the Criminal Court Assessment Tool

Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) is a model of crime prevention rooted in behavioral psychology. The basic premise is that therapeutic and social service interventions can reduce re-offense, thereby improving outcomes for both participants and the larger community. Assessment tools have been used and refined for decades to determine what service needs a case participant may have, helping court practitioners connect participants with the most appropriate, and therefore most effective, services.

Defining Risk under RNR theory is strictly limited to assessing the likelihood that a person will be arrested again on a new charge. It is not used to determine a participant's bail amount or to perfectly predict a participant's future behavior. It is a factor that informs the services that will be recommended to an individual participant, and at what intensity.

Risk

- Determine *how much treatment* is appropriate

Need

- Determine the *type of treatment* most appropriate (e.g., housing, substance use counseling, mental health services, etc.)

Responsivity

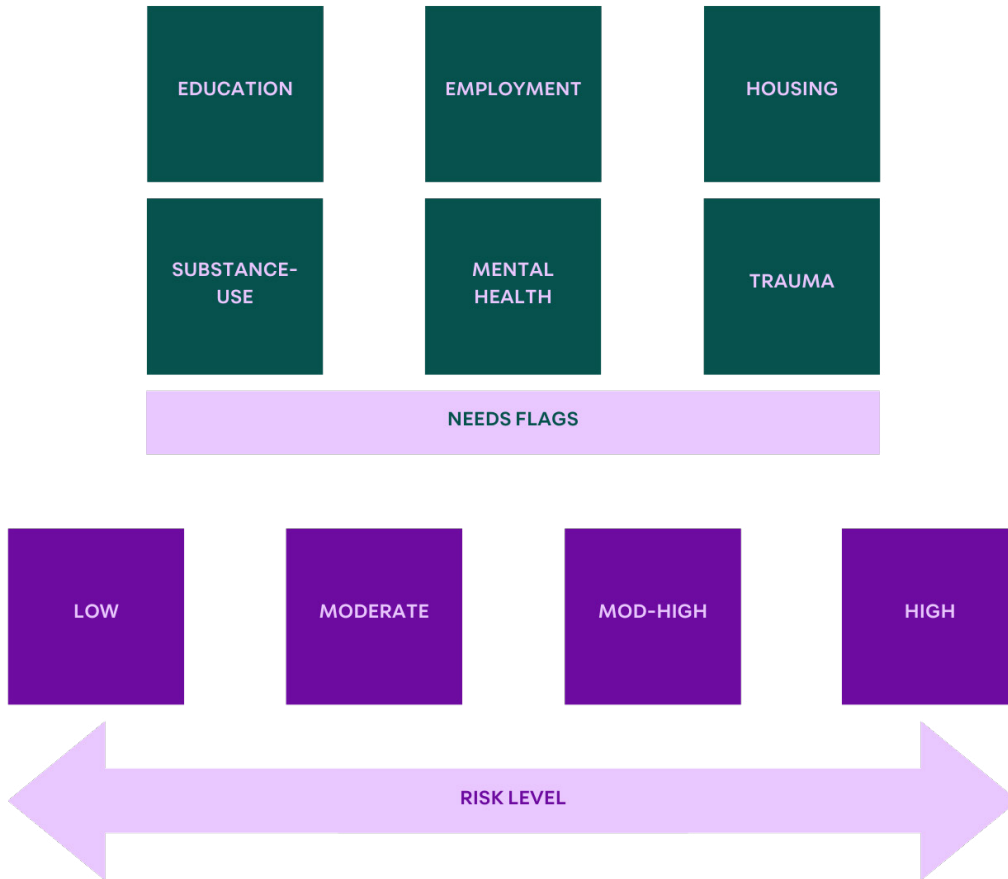
- Determine *how to deliver treatment* appropriately
- Make treatment responsive to individual cognitive and emotional styles and abilities

The Criminal Court Assessment Tool

(CCAT) is one of several tools available to conduct RNR assessments. Attributes unique to the CCAT include:

- Developed by the Center for Justice Innovation
- Free and non-proprietary
- 10 administrative questions, 25 assessment questions
- Does not require clinical or legal expertise to administer—designed to be administered by case managers, probation, and pretrial services workers
- Produces a “score” by highlighting both a risk category and needs flags

Needs Flags and Risk Category



Response Matrix

See publication: [Risk-Need-Responsivity: Response Recommendations for Community Courts](#)

Example of a Response Matrix

RISK LEVEL	LOWEST LEVEL OF OFFENSE 0-2 months	MEDIUM LEVEL OF OFFENSE 2-4 months	HIGHEST LEVEL OF OFFENSE 4-6 months
Low Risk	Voluntary services	1 session	3 sessions
Moderate Risk	1 session	3 sessions	5 sessions
Moderate-High Risk	2 sessions	4 sessions	6 sessions
High Risk	3 sessions	5 sessions	7 sessions

Desistance/Resilience Factors



(Best et al., 2021;
McNeill et al., 2012)

Risk-Need-Responsivity Research Resources

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