Center for Justice Innovation

520 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10018

p. 646 386 3100

f. 212 397 0985

innovatingjustice.org

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

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

Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR)

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.
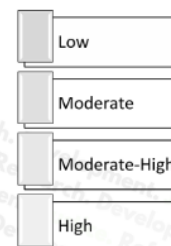
- **Risk**
    - Determine the level of treatment most appropriate
- **Need**
    - Determine the type of treatment most appropriate (e.g., housing, substance use counseling, mental health services, etc.)
- **Responsivity**
    - Determine how to make treatment responsive to individual cognitive and emotional styles

Criminal Court Assessment Tool (CCAT)

The CCAT is one of several tools available to conduct RNR assessments. Attributes unique to the CCAT include:
- Developed by the Center for Court Innovation
- Free and non-proprietary

Risk Categories

Low
Moderate
Moderate-High
High

Needs Flags

Education | Employment
Housing | Substance Use
Mental Health | Trauma

- 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

RNR Research Resources

Drawbridge, Dara C., et.al., "Risk–need–responsivity: Evaluating need-to-service matching with reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, maintenance." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, Vol. 39, pp.106-122 (2021).

Mikolajewski, Amy J. et.al., "Employing the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model and predicting successful completion in an alternative drug court program: Preliminary findings from the Orleans Parish Drug Court." *Journal of Substance Use Treatment*, Vol. 131 (Dec 2021).

Picard-Fritsche, Sarah, et.al. "The Criminal Court Assessment Tool: development and validation." *The Center for Court Innovation* (Jan 2018).

Bonta, James & Andrews, Don. "Chapter 2: Viewing offender assessment and rehabilitation through the lens of the risk-needs-responsivity model." *Offender Supervision*, ed. McNeill, Fergus, et.al. (2010).