

Wisconsin's Plan for Assessment & Case Planning in Youth Justice Statewide



The Plan

Wisconsin has selected an assessment tool for use statewide that considers a youth's risk to reoffend in the context of the youth's needs and strengths. The Youth Assessment & Screening Instrument (YASI) is validated for youth, and counties who applied and were selected for Phase 3 of implementation will begin in the Fall of 2020.

By the end of the three year phased implementation process (four phases expected), all counties will use the YASI in their youth justice cases.

How Does an Assessment Tool Work?

- An assessment tool looks at research-based static (historic and unchangeable) and dynamic (changeable) risk factors to estimate the likelihood that the same delinquent behaviors will continue **if there is no intervention**.
- It guides case planning by indicating which areas (dynamic risk factors) may be the best targets for intervention.
- A tool provides information about responsivity – to individualize the mode and strategies of services.

Why Use an Assessment Tool?



Use of an assessment tool helps us be more **targeted** and **effective**

- Research on the use of validated assessments in youth justice has grown significantly in the last decade. Assessment tools are often described as the foundation of evidence-based practices.
- We do not want to intervene more or less than is necessary. A validated assessment tool helps us match youth with the most effective level and type of supervision and services.
- This is about a more efficient use of resources to improve outcomes for youth and families, and ultimately increase community safety.

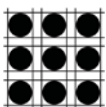


Research shows that when youth assessed at low risk are diverted, they are significantly less likely to reoffend than comparable youth facing formal court processing.¹



Use of an assessment tool **informs** and **supports** professional decision-making

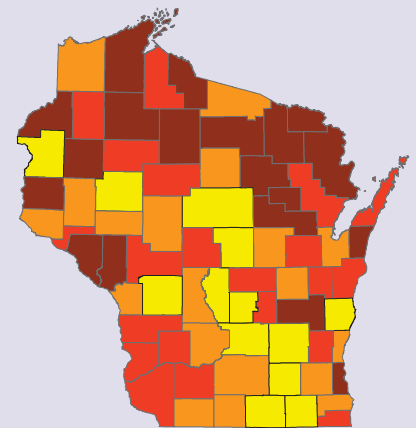
- Workers went into this profession because they want to help. A tool informs and supports professional decision-making; it does not replace it.
- Use of a tool does not create a lot of additional work, rather it helps workers do their jobs more effectively by identifying areas to focus on with youth and families to promote positive behavioral change.



Use of an assessment tool provides **consistency** across the state

- Use of a tool standardizes statewide data collection about the needs of youth referred to the YJ system, and provides a common measure of the effectiveness of interventions.
- Use of a tool statewide provides a common language across counties and stakeholder groups.

Implementation of YASI statewide Three year phased implementation Phase 3 – Fall 2020



- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4

Phase 3 Counties (Red):

Ashland, Calumet, Crawford, Door, Grant, Green Lake, Iowa, Jackson, Kenosha*, Manitowoc, Oconto, Outagamie*, Pepin, Richland, Rusk, Taylor, Vernon, Washburn, Washington, Waushara, Wood

* Currently using the YASI

What is the YASI?



The Basics

- The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI™) measures risk of reoffense, needs and strengths and helps develop case plans.
- The full YASI includes a total of 88 questions; the pre-screen includes just 33 of those questions.
- The YASI and the accompanying case planning model, Collaborative Case Works, are grounded in the principles of Risk Need and Responsivity (RNR) and Motivational Interviewing (MI).



Full assessment results are graphically displayed using a “wheel” diagram to illustrate risk, need and strength levels for the ten domains (blue areas). Users click on areas of the wheel that represent potential targets of intervention for the youth’s case plan.

Key Features of the YASI



Case Planning is Paramount

- A critical feature of the YASI is to link assessment results in an immediate way to the process of individualized case planning and appropriate service provision.
- The YASI assessment results inform the case plan. The key objective is to ensure that the assessment helps produce good decision-making and the creation of individualized plans to reduce problem behavior.
- The results help identify the targets of service that are most likely to achieve positive change.



Includes Static and Dynamic Factors

- Static factors (e.g., delinquency record) are necessary and efficient predictors of recidivism.
- Dynamic factors (e.g., adaptive skills, use of free time) are predictors of recidivism that also point to youth characteristics and behavioral patterns that need to change to reduce future problem behaviors.
- Just because a youth shows up as “high risk” does not mean the youth is dangerous. Risk levels are specific to the offense/s that brought the youth into contact with the youth justice system.



Strengths or Protective Factors

- One of the most attractive features of the YASI is the incorporation of protective factors - or strengths. These are characteristics or resources that are likely to help reduce or “cushion” the negative impact of risk factors.
- In fact, a number of studies have presented convincing evidence that high-risk youth who possess protective factors (like family strengths, attachment to school, optimism about the future), have appreciably better outcomes than high risk youth who possess few strengths.
- Assessment of strengths focuses case plans in a way that maintains or bolsters protective factors where they already exist, and helps develop new resources where needed.

[Click here for YASI brochure](#)

¹ Holly A. Wilson & Robert D. Hoge, “The Effect of Youth Diversion Programs on Recidivism: A Meta-Analytic Review,” Criminal Justice and Behavior, Vol. 40, Issue 5, pp.497-518, (October 2012).