Recommendations for an Ideal Risk Assessment Tool for Intimate Partner Violence

Approved: Dr. Banachowski-Fuller Date: May 1, 2016

Recommendations for an Ideal Risk Assessment Tool for Intimate Partner Violence

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Science in Criminal Justice

By

Jessica Evans

May 2016

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those people who have helped me on my journey towards my master's degree. First, thank you to the UW-Platteville Criminal Justice faculty members for all their input and support over the last several years. I have progressed tremendously as a result of their feedback and encouragement.

Secondly, thank you to my undergraduate professors, my employers, managers, and colleagues who inspired me to pursue my dream of completing a master's degree.

Next, thank you to my husband, Riley, and my family. You have all supported me; either emotionally, mentally, or financially, while I have embarked on this educational journey. And a huge thank you goes to my mom, Donna, for being my biggest cheerleader in all my educational and professional endeavors.

Abstract

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IDEAL RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Jessica L. Evans

Under the Supervision of Dr. Cheryl Banachowski-Fuller

Statement of the Problem

The assessment of risk, for intimate partner violence perpetrators, is an important part of evidence-based practices used in the criminal justice system. There continues to be debate in the field regarding which risk assessment tool should be used in the prediction of intimate partner violence offenders' risk. In addition, questions regarding if a secondary, specific intimate risk assessment tool is even necessary, when a primary, general risk assessment tool is used, remain.

By reviewing the literature for intimate partner violence it is clear that it is a crime that is becoming more prevalent, mainly due to enforcement practices being heightened. The criminal justice system must have a systematic approach when prioritizing these offenders. Risk assessment tools provide that approach and can give insight into what factors to target in order to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Methods and Procedures

A majority of the methodology of this paper will be from secondary research and statistics related to the use of risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence. The secondary research will be critically analyzed to determine if secondary risk assessment tools are necessary, and if so, what an ideal domestic violence risk assessment tool would entail. The sources collected will be from accredited journals and government reports.

This study will take into account the different theories used to explain the occurrence and re-occurrence of intimate partner violence. In addition, the RNR model (risk-need-responsivity) will be explored as a guide for recommendations that are evidence-based.

Summary of Results

The results of this study show that current intimate partner violence risk assessment tools are not superior to current primary risk assessment tools when trying to predict risk of recidivism. When taking into account the limited resources of the current criminal justice system, it is recommended that a secondary risk assessment tool not be used, when a comprehensive, primary risk assessment tool is. However, if an agency chooses to use a secondary risk assessment tool, this study will give recommendations for how to choose the most valuable one.

It is evident from this study that continued research is needed in this area to develop a more accurate and useful risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence. Until then, recommendations are made for what criminal justice agencies should currently use for their assessment of intimate partner violence offender risk.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

In 2013 in Canada, crime rates reached their lowest level since 1969 (Boyce, Cotter, & Perreault, 2014). Still, the criminal justice system remains overburdened by the sheer amount of individuals requiring some form of formal supervision. The resources of the current criminal justice system, matched with the number of those convicted, does not allow for effective risk management of offenders. To deal with this, the criminal justice system has looked to evidence-based practice to form its policies.

Evidence-based practice requires that policies be based on a solid foundation of evidence drawn from the best research (Walker, 2011). Evidence-based practices inform the criminal justice system of how to execute effective policies. Arguably, the most important policy requires that valid and reliable risk assessment tools must be used that assesses both the risk and the needs of offenders (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). These tools help the criminal justice system sort through offenders and target those who are most likely to recidivate, in order to use its limited resources efficiently and effectively. One category of offenders that require substantial and increasing criminal justice resources are domestic violence offenders. There has been, and continues to be, debate in the field surrounding which risk assessment tool can most accurately predict intimate partner violence recidivism.

Intimate partner violence is the most frequent type of violent crime committed in Canada and has the lowest rates of reporting to police than any other violent crime. Domestic violence has significant social, health, and economic costs. One research study in Canada estimated that the annual cost of intimate partner violence is $4,225,954,322 (Rossiter, 2011). While intimate partner violence incidents have been decreasing over

the last decade, it remains a problem that cannot be ignored. It is the criminal justice system's obligation to take serious steps toward effective risk management and risk reduction of domestic violence offenders.

Risk assessments have been used in corrections beginning in the 1970s (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Contemporary correctional systems use risk assessment tools to deal with the overload of individuals burdening the criminal justice system by prioritizing offenders. Currently, several different intimate partner violence risk assessments are being used on offenders in Canada to predict future incidents of domestic violence (Millar, Code, & Ha, 2009). However, there has been mixed evidence regarding the predictive validity of domestic violence risk assessments over general risk assessments for domestic violence offenders (Williams, 2012; Belfrage, Strand, Gibas, Kropp, & Hart, 2012).

Hanson, Helmus, and Bourgon (2007) indicate that major risk factors for spousal assault recidivism are similar to the risk factors for general criminal recidivism. They ask to what extent are specific domestic violence risk assessments even necessary? Hanson et al. (2007) note that several studies have found that general risk assessments are similar to specific risk assessments in terms of their predictive accuracy for domestic violence recidivism. In addition, Verdun-Jones, Brink, Lussier, and Nicholls (2006) note that, despite the large quantity of intimate partner violence risk assessment tools that are available, there has not been enough research conducted to conclude which tool is better than another.

Different jurisdictions in Canada use different risk assessment tools when assessing a domestic violence offender's risk for re-offence. In 2008, Millar et al.

completed a jurisdictional scan to identify which risk assessment tools were being used, by criminal justice agencies in Canada, to assess risk for intimate partner violence. Millar et al. (2008) found that, in all provinces and territories, different risk assessment tools were being used. For example, in the Yukon Territory the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), a primary risk assessment tool, as well as, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA), a secondary risk assessment tool, are both used on domestic violence offenders (Millar et al., 2008). In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment (SPRA) and the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) are used to determine the risk domestic violence offenders' pose. The inconsistent use of risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence across Canada is apparent. No consensus has been made regarding what tool is most predictably valid and useful for criminal justice agencies.

The following research will argue that secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence are not needed when comprehensive, primary risk assessment tools are used. Next, recommendations for what an ideal, secondary risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence would entail will be made.

To support the above recommendations, this paper will include an overview of the use of risk assessment tools to determine the risk level of intimate partner violence offenders and consider the following question: Is there evidence that secondary, intimate partner violence risk assessment tools are necessary or are general risk assessments sufficient? Next, this research will give recommendations for the risk assessment tool that has the best predictive accuracy for domestic violence offenders. It will then look at how Cavanaugh and Gelles' typologies of offenders, Aker's Theory of Differential

Reinforcement, and Matza and Sykes' Drift Theory and the techniques of neutralization give theoretical support for the recommendations.

II. Literature Review

This section begins by providing an overview of the domestic violence problem in Canada and outlines the criminal justice response to this violence. Next, risk assessment tools are discussed, while defining the difference between primary and secondary risk assessment tools. Then, the different factors risk assessment tools use to predict recidivism are outlined. Finally, a comparison between the predictive validity between primary and secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence is given.

A. Defining Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate partner relationship. It may include a single act of violence, or a number of acts forming a pattern of abuse through the use of assaultive and controlling behavior (Rossiter, 2011). Intimate partner relationships include couples that are legally married, common-law, same sex, separated, divorced, cohabitating, dating, and who have other sexual relationships. Intimate partner violence is also referred to as domestic violence, spousal violence, and family violence in the literature.

Intimate partner violence is not specified in the Criminal Code of Canada. Instead, charges that are available to any victim-perpetrator relationship are applied similarly to perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence offences include assault, assault causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, uttering threats, criminal harassment, sexual assault, attempted murder, manslaughter, second degree murder, and murder. Other offences that can take place in an intimate partner relationship, but are not

usually included in intimate partner violence statistics, are theft, break and enter, fraud, and mischief.

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) details police-reported offences committed against victims within an intimate relationship. In 2014, the UCR found that 27 percent of all violent crime victims were victims of intimate partner violence. This accounted for 88,600 incidents of intimate partner violence reported to police (Ibrahim, 2016). Assault was the most common offence experienced by victims (77%), followed by uttering threats (8%) and criminal harassment (6%) (Ibrahim, 2016). Police-reported incidents of intimate partner violence decreased from 2010, where there were 102,500 reported incidents (Beaupré, 2015).

According to Canada's victimization survey, the General Social Survey, 4 percent of Canadians in 2014 reported being physically or sexually abused by an intimate partner in the previous 5 years (Burczycka, 2016). In 2009, the same survey reported 6.2 percent of Canadians were domestic violence victims in the 5 years prior (Brennan, Sinha, Taylor-Butts & Porter, 2011). This decrease has continued since the previous decade. According to the General Social Survey, there were a similar number of males and females that reported experiencing domestic violence (Burczycka, 2016). However, the Uniform Crime Report found that four out of five victims who reported the violence to police were women (Ibrahim, 2016). Approximately one third of victims in the province reported physical injuries as a result of the abuse. However, women were more likely to be the victims of more serious acts. Women were twice as likely as men to be victims of serious domestic violence, which included being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a weapon (Burczycka, 2016).

Although a significant amount of people reported experiencing domestic violence, Burczycka (2016) found that less than one third of occurrences were reported to the police. Thirty-five percent of victims who did not report the violence to police did not because they felt that domestic violence was a private family matter (Burczycka, 2016). For those who did report the violence to police, motivations were varied. Stopping the violence or receiving protection were the most common reasons for reporting incidents of spousal violence to police, with 93 percent of spousal victims with child witnesses reporting it as a factor in their decision to involve police. Other reasons included a sense of duty, a desire to arrest and punish the abusive partner, and on the recommendation of someone else (Brennan et al., 2011).

Younger Canadians were more likely to report being a victim of spousal violence than were older Canadians. Those aged 25 to 34 years old were three times more likely than those aged 45 and older to state that they had been physically or sexually assaulted by their spouse (Brennan et al., 2011). Bookwala, Sobin, and Zdaniuk (2005) found that the use of domestic violence decreases as couples aged. Younger Canadians are "more likely to engage in physical arguments, and more likely to sustain injuries within their marriages than their older counterpoints" (p. 801).

B. Criminal Justice Response to Intimate Partner Violence

In recent decades, the criminal justice system and social intervention response to domestic violence has shifted. Prior to the early 1980s, domestic violence in North America was seen as a private matter and was treated differently than assaults committed by strangers (Tutty, Ursel & Douglas, 2008). The police response to domestic incidents was limited. Criminal justice policies prevented domestic violence from entering into the

public sphere. However, in the 1970s, victim advocates for abused women became vocal, demanding changes that included protection for victims (Tutty et al., 2008). The changes addressed the various components of the criminal justice system: police, prosecution and adjudication of domestic violence, and intervention programs for offenders. In response, police organizations implemented a crisis approach to domestic violence, which encouraged officers to mediate and refer the victims and abusers to social service agencies.

Pressure from victim advocates continued, which led to increased political, social, and legal pressure in Canada and the United States. In the early 1980s, police agencies began to develop policies that directed officers to apply the same standards of accountability to domestic violence as they would to any other crime, specifically violent crime. Societal pressure continued and, in addition to traditional arrest policies, mandatory or pro-arrest policies for domestic violence offenders were introduced in Canada in the early 1980s, beginning with the implementation of federal guidelines issued to the RCMP and federal and territorial Crown Prosecution offices in 1983 (Brown, 2000). By 1985, some form of spousal assault policy was in place in the majority of the provinces of Canada (Brown, 2000). Pro-arrest policies became the preferred response of police services, based on a number of studies that demonstrated that arrest deterred recidivism in domestic violence cases (Brown, 2000). Among these studies was the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, conducted by Sherman and Berk in 1984. In their research eligible individuals were randomly assigned to three categories, that included: those who were arrested, those who were given advice by police officers, and those who were told to leave their home for 8 hours. The results

showed that those who were arrested had lower recidivism rates at six-month follow-up than the other two groups (Brown, 2011).

Mandatory or pro-arrest policies were implemented for a number of reasons. First, there was a perceived notion that the criminal justice system had an inadequate response to spousal violence. Secondly, and most importantly, the policies were created to ensure that spousal violence was recognized as a serious social problem, and not just a private one. Lastly, these policies were implemented to remove the woman's burden of having to choose whether or not charges should be laid.

Although mandatory arrest policies were implemented in the 1980s, it took the creation of the Domestic Violence Court (DVC) program to implement the policy more consistently (Tutty et al., 2008). In addition, policy reforms led to a massive influx of domestic violence cases into criminal courts, and resources to the criminal justice system needed to be expanded (Bradley, O'Sullivan, Rempel, & Moore, 2010). Domestic violence courts encourage the implementation of a community approach to solving domestic violence. These specialized courts take a restorative approach in addressing crime and have become popular throughout North America and the world. In the case of domestic violence, this has meant developing interventions that attempt to prevent further offenses by changing offender behavior through therapeutic interventions that can include counseling and intensive supervision, while also providing services to victims. These specialized courts use measures such as mandatory domestic violence treatment and regular review hearings to monitor defendants' compliance with court orders while under supervision. Domestic violence courts represent a comprehensive intervention system rather than traditional sentencing in a criminal court.

Today, the criminal justice system intervenes in a majority of cases of domestic violence in Canada and the United States (Tutty et al., 2008). Policy changes have occurred at all levels of the justice system including the police, prosecutions, courts and corrections. Police intervention and crown prosecution of spousal abuse incidents were seen as critical elements of an overall societal response to the problem. The implementation of the policies was also seen as an important step towards protecting individual victims. By placing the onus for laying charges on the police and Crown, the victim could indicate to her abusive partner that the decision to proceed was not hers, and therefore reduce the potential for retaliation at the hands of her partner. The ultimate goal of the policies was to achieve a reduction in the incidence of spousal violence.

C. Risk Assessment Tools and the Criminal Justice System

Bonta and Andrews (2007) indicate that, prior to the 1970s, professionals in the field decided assessment of offender risk, alone. This type of assessment is considered a first-generation risk assessment where practitioners make judgments regarding risk, based solely on their intuition and experience (Shaffer, Kelly, & Lieberman, 2011). However, by the 1970s, there was an expanding awareness that any assessment of risk for offenders should be determined by actuarial, evidence-based science and not on professional judgment alone (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). In addition, the need to determine and treat the most serious offenders within an overburdened system brought about a proliferation of tools (Messing & Thaller, 2012).

Second generation risk assessment tools were designed to improve accuracy of predicting criminality, as clinical judgment was found to be "inferior to objective and structured methods of prediction" (Shaffer et al., 2011, p. 168). These tools, referred to as

actuarial risk assessment tools, are based on empirically supported risk factors. Bonta and Andrews (2007) argue that risk assessments must include three principles. The first one, the risk principle, states that the level of service must be matched with level of risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). As such, high-intensity treatment should be targeted toward high-risk offenders. Bonta and Andrews (2007) note that research has shown that actuarial risk assessment tools are better at predicting future criminal behavior than professional judgment. However, there are shortcomings in that the items are based on statistics. Therefore, many are not relevant for supervision purposes. In addition, actuarial risk assessment tools are based on static factors and are unable to account for changes in behavior.

Due to the limitations of actuarial risk assessments, in the early 1980s, risk assessment tools began to include dynamic factors (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Static items remained as a part of risk assessment tools; however, new items that contained dynamic factors were included which could assess an offender's current and changing situation. These risk assessments, referred to as third-generation assessments, are theoretically driven and assess both risk and need because they identify offender's criminogenic needs that can be targeted through intervention (Shaffer et al., 2011; Lowenkamp, Latessa, & Holsinger, 2006). The need principle, therefore, indicates what variable risk factors for crime should be treated (Messing & Thaller, 2013). Successful intervention can result in an offender's diminished risk to reoffend. However, these assessments provide "relatively little guidance in terms of case management or strategies for best addressing risk/needs" (Shaffer et al., 2011, p. 169).

In more recent years, new, more comprehensive risk assessment tools have been

introduced that "integrate systematic intervention and monitoring with the assessment of a broader range of offender risk factors heretofore not measured and other personal factors important to treatment" (Bonta & Andrews, 2007, p. 39). These fourth-generation risk assessment tools include a third principle of effective intervention: responsivity. This principle requires that the personal circumstances and abilities of an offender must be taken into account in order to have the most effective intervention. In addition, effective correctional intervention must use cognitive behavioral models of treatment (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). Bonta and Andrews (2007) argue that, based on their research, risk assessment tools that include all three principles: risk, need, and responsivity, are the most effective for formal criminal justice supervision.

D. Difference Between Primary and Secondary Risk Assessment Tools

In addition to the different generations of risk assessment tools, they are also divided based upon what type of reoffending they are being used to predict. Primary, or general, risk assessment tools give information regarding how likely an offender is to reoffend, generally within a given time period. Offences can include technical violations for non-compliance as well as any other Criminal Code violation. Secondary, or specific, risk assessment tools can predict the likeliness of reoffending for specific offences, such as violence, domestic violence, and sexual violence, within a specific time frame.

Currently, these types of assessments are usually used in conjunction with one another, when being used to determine supervision levels by the criminal justice system. All offenders have a primary risk assessment tool completed on them, while secondary risk assessment tools are completed when an offence falls into a certain category.

Usually, whichever tool reports the higher risk, that level is used for how intense supervision will be.

E. Factors Risk Assessment Tools Use To Predict Recidivism

Risk assessment tools use many different factors to predict recidivism. Static factors that are often in risk assessment tools include, but are not limited to: are age at time of assessment, gender, age at first conviction, prior non-compliance convictions, and prior criminal history (Shaffer et al., 2011). Dynamic risk factors, those amenable to change, that are included on risk assessment tools, but are not limited to, are substance abuse, attitude, peer associations, employment and education, financial situation, self-management skills, anti-social personality, and number of address changes during the assessment period (Coleman, Peyton, & Johnson, 2003).

Intimate partner violence risk assessment tools can include some similar factors as general risk assessment tools such as age, gender, prior criminal convictions, substance use, attitude, anti-social personality, and self-management. However, they also include other static factors like number of children, past assaults, past violation of "no contact" orders, and being a victim or witness to family violence as a child or adolescent. Dynamic factors included in intimate partner violence risk assessments are interpersonal aggression, weapon use, insight into violence, stability of relationship, suicidal or homicidal ideation or intent, recent escalation in frequency or severity of assault, and minimization (Wong & Gordon, 2006; Hilton, Harris, Rice, Lang, Cormier, & Lines, 2004; Kropp & Hart, 2000).

While primary and secondary risk assessment tools often overlap in their static and dynamic factors, there is no consensus in the field regarding which factors should be

used in every risk assessment. Most risk assessment instruments use offender and victim interviews, as well as a review of any formal records available to the assessor. However, there are variations in what information they glean from those interviews and records. Furthermore, primary and secondary risk assessment tools assess many different factors than one another, with intimate partner violence risk assessments asking relationship specific questions. Yet, there remains a similar prediction rate of recidivism for both types of instruments in regard to intimate partner violence.

F. Predictive Validity of Primary and Secondary Risk Assessment Tools For Intimate Partner Violence

Predictive validity, or the correct prediction of future events, arguably is the most important measurement of the efficacy of a risk assessment tool (Messing & Thaller, 2012). In 2001, Hilton and her colleagues questioned to what extent a specialized risk assessment is necessary in predicting future violence among domestic violence offenders. Hanson and Wallace-Capretta (2000) found that a third generation general risk assessment tool predicted violent recidivism and recommended that a general risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence be used unless "future research demonstrates the superiority of instruments developed specifically for predicting domestic violence" (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004, p. 780).

A long line of research attempts to identify risk factors that predict continuing and escalating violence. According to Heckert and Gondolf (2004), some fairly consistent risk factors have been identified in this research. They include prior assault, excessive alcohol or drug use, previous criminality, severe personality disorders and/or psychological problems, abuse or neglect as a child, and program dropout (Heckert &

Gondolf, 2004). Nevertheless, Heckert and Gondolf (2004) argue that the predictive power of these factors is arguably weak and that there are many false positives and false negatives.

In one study conducted by Weisz and her colleagues in 2000, they found that asking a victim how likely the batterer was to become violent in the next year was "the single best predictor of severe violence" (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004, p. 781). In Heckert and Gondolf's (2004) research, they found important predictors of future violence including age, race, living together at intake, having children living with the batterer, the woman receiving injuries, previous psychological abuse, the batterer working as a laborer or service worker, having a non-domestic violence arrest prior, and the use of a shelter or social services by the victim. They also confirmed that women's predictions regarding future domestic violence were, in some cases, more predictably valid than domestic violence risk assessment tools.

Intimate partner violence is a societal issue that cannot be ignored. The criminal justice response to intimate partner violence has shifted over time and is beginning to treat it as a serious problem. Due to the influx of offenders and the increased response, the criminal justice system has looked to evidence-based practice to manage increased numbers effectively. The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model proposed by Bonta and Andrews (2007) has become the preferential way of completing offender classification by way of risk assessment. Whether or not a secondary risk assessment tool to assess intimate partner violence is needed, when a primary risk assessment tool is also completed, is a question that remains unanswered. Agreement among which individualized risk factors are essential to predicting domestic violence recidivism has

not been reached in the literature. However, consensus in the field is that the predictive ability of any assessment should be at the forefront when making any recommendations regarding use.

III. Theoretical Framework

Maguire and Duffee (2015) state that attention to theory "is a crucial ingredient in the scientific development of the field" (p. 3). Many theories have been used to try and to explain the occurrence of intimate partner violence. In the following section, the typologies proposed by Hultzworth-Munroe and Stuart will be outlined, which classifies domestic violence offenders into different categories. Next, Aker's Theory of Differential Reinforcement and Matza and Sykes' Drift Theory and techniques of neutralization will be outlined as a way of explaining the occurrence of intimate partner violence.

A. Domestic Violence Offender Typologies

According to the research, there is little evidence to support that there is one specific typology of offender who commits domestic violence. Cavanaugh and Gelles (2005) state that there is an "increasing body of empirical evidence that demonstrates that not all batterers are alike" (p.157). However, they indicate that the development of empirically based behavioral and psychological typologies provides clear evidence that offenders vary across types. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) have identified three different typologies of offenders in their research.

The typologies for domestic violence offenders refer to male offenders only. They include family-only offenders, generally violent/anti-social offenders, and borderline offenders (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). The family-only type of

offender is the least violent subgroup. These men are primarily abusive to their intimate partners and engage in the least marital violence. According to Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) research, men in the family-only subgroup constitute approximately 50 percent of research samples. The generally violent/anti-social offenders engage in high levels of marital violence and often have long criminal histories. They are also the most likely to display characteristics of anti-social personality disorder. This type constitutes 25 percent of research samples. The last subtype identified by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) is the borderline offender. These men are predicted to engage in moderate to severe marital violence. This group's violence is primarily directed toward their partner; however, they do engage in some outside violence. These men are also the most psychologically distressed. They experience delusional jealousy and do not cope well with separation from their partner. These men make up about 25% of research samples (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). According to Cavanaugh and Gelles (2005), Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's typology has become the standard in batterer typology.

In 2005, Cavanaugh and Gelles conducted a study to determine, among other things, if domestic violence offenders could be differentiated across typological groupings, based on their general risk to reoffend. Their study found that generally violent/anti-social batterers were more likely to recidivate and more likely to recidivate repeatedly and more quickly than other batterers. Cavanaugh and Gelles (2005) concluded that the three types of domestic violence offenders fall into a low, moderate, and high-risk offender with family-only offenders being the lowest risk to reoffender, borderline offenders being at moderate risk, and generally violent/anti-social offenders at a high-risk to reoffend. They also state that the offenders' risk level does not escalate

over time, and instead, offenders remain the same type of offender throughout their lifespan.

B. **Differential Reinforcement Theory**

Ron Akers developed the Differential Reinforcement Theory, one of many social learning theories. The Differential Reinforcement Theory assumes people are born with a blank slate and must be socialized and taught how to behave through various forms of learning (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 444). These forms of learning are classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and modeling and imitation.

Classical Conditioning was derived from Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association Theory. The theory suggests that crime is learned from people's close associates, who teach us the techniques and the motivation for crime. Sutherland theorizes that "crime occurs when the ratio of associations favorable to violation of the law outweigh associations favorable to conforming to the law" (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 441). B.F. Skinner developed operant conditioning, which suggests that behavior is reinforced through reward, otherwise known as positive reinforcement, and avoidance of punishment, known as negative reinforcement. Punishment takes two forms as well. Positive punishment comes in the form of stimuli, while negative punishment results from the absence of stimuli. Tibbetts and Hemmens (2010) explain, "Whether deviant behavior or conforming behavior occurs and continues depends on the past and present rewards or punishment for the behavior, and the rewards and punishment attached to alternative behavior" (p. 445). Aker's also emphasized learning through imitation and modeling. He used Bandura's Model of Modeling/Imitation that suggests: "people learn

much of their attitudes and behavior from simply observing the behavior of others, namely through mimicking what others do" (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 446).

Aker's Differential Reinforcement Theory provides a valid explanation for domestic violence and has been empirically supported. Domestic violence is a crime that happens in an individual's home. The people we closely associate and spend our time with is our family, which mainly happens in the home. The home is the context of where most domestic violence incidents occur. Therefore, if domestic violence is present in one's home, people are being classically conditioned to become perpetrators of these assaults. Motivation is also learned through the family, recognizing that, by being aggressive, one can have his/her own needs met. When applying Bandura's Model of Modeling/Imitation, people do not need to experience domestic violence in order to repeat it. If people's families model abusive behaviors and attitudes, it is certain children will learn this behavior. Primary risk assessment tools generally attempt to measure an individual's attitude and belief system toward intimate partner violence; while a few of the secondary tools assess whether or not an individual witnessed domestic violence as a child.

C. Drift Theory and the Techniques of Neutralization

David Matza and Gresham Sykes created Matza's Drift Theory and coined the term "techniques of neutralization" (Bullock & Condry, 2013). Sykes and Matza believe that most people who commit crime hold conventional values and beliefs; however, they often drift between two worlds (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). When individuals drift into a world where they commit crime, they can avoid feelings of guilt by justifying and rationalizing their actions through the process of neutralization (Tibbetts & Hemmens,

2010). These neutralizations can follow deviant behavior in order to justify it or precede it in order to make it possible (Bullock & Condry, 2013). The techniques of neutralization include denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties.

As Sykes and Matza point out, most people that commit crime hold conventional values and beliefs. This, in particular, describes many domestic violence offenders, especially the family-only type representing 50 percent of these perpetrators (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). These offenders do not engage in other criminal activity. These men live a relatively normal life but drift between their conventional life and engaging in violent behavior inside the home. Often times, this behavior is hidden behind closed doors, which allows the offender to continue this pattern.

Sykes and Matza's theory plays a role in the criminal justice system today. Risk assessments often include dynamic factors such as attitude, which measures whether an offender takes responsibility for his/her actions or minimizes or rationalizes it. This type of dynamic factor is considered a criminogenic need and targeted through intervention if identified in a risk assessment instrument. In addition, because they argue that many offenders hold conventional values, general risk assessment tools attempt to measure the stability of an individual within society by using factors such as education, employment, residential stability, and family and peer relationships.

Intimate partner violence can be explained by many different theories. The theories described above explain the occurrence of domestic violence and domestic violence recidivism. Risk assessment tools use theories in order to develop what individualized factors will be measured. The typologies proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe

(1994) point out the importance of risk assessments being able to decipher between different classifications of offenders. Aker's Theory of Differential Reinforcement explains behavior through the attitudes and self-management skills one develops. It is clear, through Matza and Sykes Drift Theory and techniques of neutralization, that factors that measure the stability of an individual are important.

IV. Case Studies

Many different risk assessment tools are currently used by the criminal justice system for intimate partner violence. The following will outline three primary risk assessment tools that are currently used: The Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale, the Level of Service Inventory-Revised, and the Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment. Next, the most common secondary risk assessment tools are examined: The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment, the Danger Assessment, and the Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide.

A) Primary Risk Assessment Tools

i) Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale

The Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale was developed in the 1970s in order to determine risk level, supervision level, and treatment needs of parolees and probationers (Henderson & Miller, 2013). In the 1980s, other states adopted this model for use in probation including New York, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas. The Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale "is the most widely adopted risk needs assessment in the United States" (Henderson & Miller, 2013, p. 200). It uses both static and dynamic factors for determining risk. These factors include: number of address changes in the last year, percentage of time employed in the last year, alcohol usage problems, drug problems,

attitude of offenders, age at first conviction, number of prior periods of probation/parole supervision and revocations, prior felony convictions, prior or current assaultive adjudications of guilt, and convictions of either burglary, theft, robbery, worthless checks or forgery (Henderson & Miller, 2013). In addition, a needs assessment is identified through the following factors: academic/vocational skills, employment, financial management, marital/family relationships, companions, emotional stability, alcohol usage problems, other drug usage problems, mental ability, health, sexual behavior and the officer's impression of offenders' needs (Henderson & Miller, 2013).

Henderson and Miller (2013) state that the Wisconsin Risk Assessment Instrument was modified after criticism in the 1980s that the tool was not valid. In 1998, Yacus evaluated the tool and found evidence that it was predictive of recidivism; however, other studies found evidence to the contrary. In 2009, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections conducted a study that found it "may not be the optimal risk/need instrument to be utilized with probation and parole offenders" (Henderson & Miller, 2013, p. 199). Henderson and Miller (2013) conducted a study of the Wisconsin instrument with an independent sample of Texas male probationers and found that "the Wisconsin Risk Needs instrument does not provide the classification and predictive accuracy that community supervision departments warrant for the most efficient use of resources" (p. 199). They recommend that agencies discontinue the use of the Wisconsin Risk Needs Assessment.

ii) Level of Service Inventory-Revised

Bonta and Andrews developed the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) in 1995, which revised the earlier Level of Service Inventory that was developed in the late

1980s. It is a risk classification tool, based on a general personality and cognitive social learning perspective that assesses both dynamic and static factors of criminality (Andrews & Wormith, 2000). The LSI-R consists of 54 items that are sorted into the ten substantive areas, believed to be related to future criminal behavior. These include: criminal history (10 items); education and employment (10 items); financial (2 items); family and marital (4 items); accommodations (3 items); leisure and recreation (2 items); companions (5 items); alcohol and drugs (9 items); emotional and personal (5 items); and attitude and orientation (4 items) (Coleman, Peyton, & Johnson, 2003). Offenders are interviewed to score the LSI-R and rated on items requiring either a yes or no response or on a scale ranging from 0 to 3. Based on the responses from the offender, an item is scored and then all scores are totaled to determine the offender's overall risk level (Coleman et al., 2003).

Although the LSI-R is largely utilized by the criminal justice system in many countries, including Canada, its usefulness in the prediction of recidivism amongst domestic violence offenders requires further examination. In a study conducted by Hendricks, Werner, Shipway, & Turinetti (2006), they "explore the efficacy of the LSI-R in predicting recidivism for domestic violence offenders" (p.704). They found that the LSI-R contributed to the prediction of recidivism; however, only somewhat better than by chance. Hendricks et al. (2006) concluded that the LSI-R added "little to the prediction of recidivism" among their sample of domestic violence offenders (p. 715).

iii) Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment

The Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment (SPRA) is a risk assessment tool that examines a number of empirically based risk factors considered predictive of general

criminal recidivism. The risk factors assessed by the SPRA include: criminal history, residence stability, education/employment, financial situation, family/marital relationships, peers, drug and alcohol use, attitude, anti-social behavior, and self-management (Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, 2009). The Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment is currently used on all offenders who are sentenced to community-based sentences as well as some offenders serving provincial custodial sentences.

The SPRA evolved from the Wisconsin Case Classification System (WCCS), which was developed by the state of Wisconsin in 1979. According to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections (2009), "the WCCS's purpose was to predict general recidivism, that is, reconviction for any criminal offence including breach of probation or violation of parole, for a population of probationers and parolees" (p. 5). The WCCS was made up of 21 items and provided an overall level of risk for general recidivism as well as identification of criminogenic needs as targets for intervention. Validation research with the WCCS confirmed its ability to predict future re-offending. As a result, this instrument was adopted by a number of jurisdictions in both the United States and Canada.

The WCCS was revised based on research in the early 1990s, and items that were not shown to be predictive of future reoffending behavior were removed, resulting in a new assessment that retained 15 out of the 21 original items. This revised assessment was labeled the Primary Risk Assessment (PRA) and was introduced in a number of Canadian jurisdictions in the late 1990s.

In 2006, due to the fact that a number of items in the PRA were not related to future criminal behavior, neither empirically nor theoretically, Saskatchewan Adult

Corrections initiated a review of the PRA (Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, 2009). After a review of available research, the Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment (SPRA) was developed. Two thousand three hundred and seventy-six Saskatchewan offenders between 1996 and 2006 were assessed for their risk level and then followed up in the community for a three-year period. The SPRA was implemented province-wide in the Community Operations division of Adult Corrections on May 1, 2007 (Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, 2009).

In 2013, Patrick, Orton, and Wormith conducted research to determine the predictive validity of the Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment. They determined that there was a correlation between the SPRA total score and the dichotomous recidivism variable ($r = 0.319$, $p < 0.01$), representing a significant relationship between the individual items and recidivism (Patrick et al., 2013). However, the correlation between individual SPRA factors and recidivism all had a weak relationship. Therefore, individual factors were not predicting recidivism as well as were hoped.

B. Secondary Risk Assessment Tools

i) Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment

The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) is an actuarial risk assessment tool that is used to assess the risk of domestic violence recidivism posed by a man who has come to the attention of the police for assault against his partner or ex-partner. The ODARA was developed by Hilton, Zarris, Rice, Lang, Cormier, and Lines in 2004, based on a study of 589 men known to police in Ontario, and is scored on 13 predictive items that include: domestic and non-domestic criminal history, threats to harm and confinement during the index incident, children in the relationship, substance abuse,

and barriers to victim support. The ODARA score provides two main pieces of information: how the man's risk compares with that of other offenders by indicating the rank order; that is, the proportion of domestic violence offenders who pose that level of risk. Secondly, how likely the man is to assault again. The higher the score, the more likely he is to assault a female partner again, the more frequent and severe assaults will be, and the sooner he will assault (Hilton et al., 2004).

The ODARA has been adopted by several provinces across Canada and is used by police, victim services agencies, and probation. However, the ODARA's original intent was for it to be used and scored by frontline police officers on the basis of readily available information. A shortcoming of the ODARA is that it is only applicable to males in a heterosexual relationship who have lived with their partner. In addition, because the tool is an actuarial assessment and only assesses static factors, it is unable to change. Due to this, it is also not particularly useful for supervision purposes (Bonta & Andrews, 2007).

In a study by Hilton, Harris, Rice, Houghton, and Eke (2008), they found that the ODARA score predicted wife assault recidivism in police records, with an ROC area of .77 in construction, and .72 in 100 cross-validation cases. Hilton et al. (2008) concluded that because the ODARA was originally intended for use by police officers and does not take into account in-depth clinical information, it could lead to suboptimal prediction.

ii) Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA)

Kropp and Hart developed the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Tool (SARA) in 2000. It is a manual that recommends how assessment of risk should be conducted for spousal violence. This includes the training required of evaluators; what information is

needed to form the basis of the evaluation; what risk factors should be considered; and how the judgment of risk should be documented and communicated (Kropp & Hart, 2000).

According to Hanson, Helmus, and Bourgon (2007), the SARA is the most widely used risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence. It contains twenty items including criminal history, psychological functioning, and current social adjustment. The authors developed the SARA as a guide for structuring professional judgment; however, this is often bypassed with the final risk rating being based on a sum of the risk items. Although this was not the intent of the authors, when it is used as such, it is considered a spousal assault risk scale (Hanson et al., 2007).

Part one of the SARA measures general violence risk factors. These include: past assault of family members; past assault of strangers or acquaintances; past violation of conditional supervision or community supervision; recent relationship problems; recent employment problems; victim of and/or witness to family violence as a child or adolescent; recent substance abuse/dependence; recent suicidal or homicidal ideation or intent; recent psychotic and/or manic symptoms; and personality disorder with anger, impulsivity, or behavioral instability (Kropp & Hart, 2000). Part two of the SARA measures spousal violence risk factors. These include past physical assault; past sexual assault/sexual jealousy; past use of weapons and/or credible threats of death; recent escalation in frequency or severity of assault; past violation of "no contact" orders; extreme minimization or denial of spousal assault history; attitudes that support or condone spousal assault; severe and/or sexual assault for the index incident; use of

weapons and/or credible threats of death during the index incident; and violation of no-contact order during the index incident (Kropp & Hart, 2000).

The SARA determines the overall degree of risk of an offender, which takes into account the likelihood, nature, severity, frequency, and imminent threat of future violence. The SARA's 20 items are gleaned from empirical and clinical literature, and are scored 0, 1, or 2. All 20 items are scored and summed for an item total score. Although the SARA manual advises that interviews with the accused perpetrator and victim(s) be conducted, the total score coded from file information has achieved inter-rater reliability over .80 and has predicted wife assault recidivism (Hilton et al., 2008).

Kropp and Hart (2000) also conducted research on the SARA to see how predictive the tool was. The sample included 102 men who were serving terms of probation for up to 2 years for a spousal assault in British Columbia. They examined the ability of the SARA to discriminate between men who did not recidivate following spousal assault group treatment and those who did. The results of the research found that the SARA significantly differentiated between these two groups and there was a clear tendency for those who were rated high risk to re-offend and those who were low risk to not (Kropp & Hart, 2000).

Hilton et al. (2008) indicate that the SARA is more of an in-depth risk assessment compared to the ODARA. It is scored from using in-depth correctional and clinical records. Hilton et al. (2008) notes that the SARA "can be considered a candidate in the search for assessments to improve upon the information routinely available to frontline police officers" (p. 159).

ii) **Danger Assessment (DA)**

Of the intimate partner violence risk assessments, the Danger Assessment (DA) is the oldest measure still commonly used (Hanson, Helmus, & Bourgon, 2007). Developed by Campbell, it was originally developed in the emergency room setting for nurses to assess the risk that battered women faced for murder at the hands of their partner. Although not designed in this way, the DA has frequently been used to predict domestic violence recidivism.

The Danger Assessment is an abuse history interview plus a structured scale, designed to assess the risk of lethal wife assault (Hilton et al., 2008). Completion of the DA takes a collaborative approach between the evaluator and the victim of spousal violence. The 2003 version of the DA includes a timeline describing the frequency and severity of abuse, 20 yes/no questions. The items assess the offender's violence history, access to weapons, substance abuse history, tendency toward jealousy, incidents of sexual assault, threats, and the victim's worry of being killed, with an algorithm to translate responses into risk categories (Hanson et al., 2007). Test-retest reliability has been at .89 or above and it has been shown to be predictive of partner assault recidivism (Hilton et al., 2008).

iii) **Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (DVRAG)**

The Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (DVRAG) is an actuarial in-depth assessment that measures risk for wife assault recidivism. The DVRAG was created by combining the 13 items from the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) and the score received from the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised scale (PCL-R); altogether being a 14-item actuarial tool that assesses wife assault recidivism with males

who have a correctional history (Hilton et al., 2008). Results from Hilton et al. (2008) found that the DVRAG final scores exhibited good inter-rater reliability, and large, cross-validated effects in the prediction of partner assault recidivism. DVRAG predictive accuracy showed an ROC area of .71, and maintained predictive accuracy in a cross-validation sample, exhibiting an ROC area of .64. Research has shown that the DVRAG serves as a comprehensive actuarial approach that has predictive accuracy in assessing male intimate partner violence against women. However, as this tool is quite in-depth in nature and analyzes the psychosocial and clinical information that is more often available to mental health clinicians, its intended use is best suited for forensic professionals (Hilton et al., 2008). Developing and validating actuarial risk assessment measures to be applied in other criminal justice domains has been a particular concern for Hilton, Harris, & Rice (2010), who made the decision to expand the risk assessment system to the "front line," that is, law enforcement officers. In the efforts to not limit risk assessment to clinical professionals or actuaries, another tool was developed with the intention that the primary or principle users would be police officers. It was their hope that this interfacing at the criminal systems level could be done in a variety of ways: utilizing an intimate partner risk assessment measure to inform police officers' decision making process for domestic violence cases regarding detainment, offering the victim additional protective services if need be, a means to inform court decisions about set bail, and assist courts with the conditions applied upon conditional release or sentencing (Hilton et al., 2010).

Outlined are some of the many different risk assessment tools that are currently used by the criminal justice system to assess intimate partner violence offenders' risk to reoffend. The Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale, the Saskatchewan Primary Risk

Assessment, and the Level of Service Inventory-Revised are all general risk assessment tools. The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment, the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment, the Danger Assessment, and the Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide are all secondary risk assessment tools used by the criminal justice system.

V. Recommendations for an Ideal Risk Assessment Tool for Intimate Partner Violence

The purpose of this paper is to answer the following questions: Are secondary risk assessments necessary when assessing intimate partner violence? Or do primary risk assessment tools suffice when trying to predict recidivism for domestic violence offenders? The following section argues that secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence are not needed when comprehensive, primary risk assessment tools are used. Next, if agencies chose to continue the use of secondary risk assessment tools, recommendations are made for what an ideal, secondary risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence would entail.

A. Recommendations For the Use of Secondary Risk Assessment Tools for Intimate Partner Violence when Primary Risk Assessment Tools are Used

One question that remained within the literature regarding the use of risk assessment tools in the criminal justice system is: are specific (IPV) risk assessment tools necessary? To answer this specific question, one must look to predictive accuracy. It is becoming evident in the research that primary risk assessment tools have similar predictive accuracy than that of secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence. Some researchers even argue that primary risk assessment tools are even more accurate than secondary tools. Hanson et al. (2007) state that risk scales used to predict general recidivism were "somewhat more accurate than the risk scales designed to predict

spousal assault recidivism" (p. 7). In a systematic review of intimate partner violence risk assessments by Nicholls, Pritchard, Reeves, and Hilterman (2013), they found that "the predictive accuracy of IPV risk assessments is well within the range of the general violence risk assessment measures and may best be described as moderate and significantly better than chance" (p. 145). This is likely the main reason why there is no standard intimate partner violence risk assessment tool in the criminal justice field.

One reason that there is similar predictive accuracy between primary and secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence is that risk factors that have been found to predict general violence also predict spousal violence. All primary risk assessment tools try to predict general violent recidivism along with other general offenses. The factors many of them use to predict future general violence include: young age, low socio-economic status, background of criminal history, substance abuse history, and antisocial behaviors and attitudes (Harris et al., 2011). These factors have also been correlated with intimate partner violence recidivism.

Ulmer (2015) compared the ODARA and Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI), a fourth generation risk assessment tool based on the LSI, and found that both had equal ability to accurately predict general recidivism; yet, the LS/CMI was superior when it came to accurate non-recidivism prediction. For intimate partner violence recidivism prediction, the ODARA demonstrated better re-offense detection, while the LS/CMI exhibited greater accuracy in avoiding false alarms. However, both had overall poor predictive accuracy of domestic violence recidivism. Ulmer (2015) concluded that, using either of these tools as a means for assessing recidivism among batterers, "does not seem like the best use of agency resources or

potential user's time" (p. 27).

Since secondary risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence have not been proven to add predictive ability, it is recommended that one not be used when a comprehensive primary risk assessment is completed. When considering the reality of the limited resources available in the criminal justice system, it is concluded that the time used to complete these assessments, could be better spent in other evidence-based practice, such as cognitive behavioral programming. Gaining information from the victim, especially their fear of future violence, appears to be an important factor to take into account when assessing domestic violence offender risk. However, this information can be gathered without the use of a secondary risk assessment tool.

Hanson and Wallace-Capretta (2000) found that a third generation general risk assessment tool predicted violent recidivism and recommended that a general risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence should be used unless "future research demonstrates the superiority of instruments developed specifically for predicting domestic violence" (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004, p. 780). Since this time, no secondary risk assessment tool for intimate partner violence has demonstrated superiority over general risk assessments for the prediction of intimate partner violence recidivism. Therefore, using a tool as such is not imperative to assessing intimate partner violence risk.

B. Recommendations for an Ideal Secondary Risk Assessment Tool for Intimate Partner Violence

Although it is argued that a secondary risk assessment is not necessary, nor the best way to spend an agencies' time, there is some research regarding which tool is best. Hilton et al. (2008) examined whether the ODARA "could be improved upon by adding

tools that require in-depth psychosocial and clinical information" (p. 154). Among the tools they scanned, the PCL-R showed the most promise in regard to improving prediction compared to using the ODARA alone. As described previously, combining the ODARA and PCL-R was done in the development of the DVRAG. Hilton et al. (2008) concluded that the DVRAG performed better than all other formal intimate partner violence assessments and that no improvement was made by adding any other formal assessment or individual factors.

Identifying treatment and supervision needs can be important to different parts of the criminal justice system, such as community-based supervision. Nicholls et al. (2013) indicate that the SARA is a good option for identifying criminogenic needs; and, therefore, offers more insight than actuarial measures, such as the ODARA. However, the SARA and PCL-R are more resource intensive than actuarial measures such as the ODARA. Therefore, the setting and context needs to be taken into account to ensure that the right information is available to yield the most accurate score.

Yet, even in light of the above information, Verdun-Jones, Brink, Lussier, and Nicholls (2006) note that, despite the large quantity of intimate partner violence risk assessment tools that are available, there has not been enough research conducted to conclude which tool is better than another. Nicholls et al. (2013) agree, stating that after their study, they remained unconvinced that there was "sufficient evidence to support the superiority of any one risk assessment tool for use in cases of IPV" (p. 155).

For the assessment and treatment of offenders, the risk-need-responsivity model is considered best practice. Nicholls et al. (2013) state that this model has been predominantly used when developing primary risk assessment tools and recommend it be

used “as a strong conceptual foundation to inform assessment and management” of domestic violence offenders (p. 157). Therefore, if a criminal justice agency chooses to use an intimate partner violence risk assessment tool, and their resources allow, they should use a more resource-intensive assessment, such as the SARA or DVRAG. However, there is not enough evidence to conclude that this will enhance the classification of offender risk. Any new development of secondary risk assessment tools should be consistent with the general principles of the risk-need-responsivity model.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

Given the multitude of risk-assessment tools available, it is imperative that consideration be given to the criteria used in an agency’s selection of an instrument. Offender classification of risk should occur in a way that the greatest accuracy is achieved in both prediction and treatment needs identification, using the least number of factors. The importance of accurate classification is compounded by the fact that high levels of supervision tend to be beneficial only to higher risk offenders (Bonta & Andrews, 2007).

Heilbrun (2009) indicates when clinicians and administrators are faced with the challenge of determining which measure(s) to use to assess risk of intimate partner violence they should carefully consider the purpose of the assessment. Also, Messing and Thaller (2012) note that additional factors need to be taken into account beside predictive validity, which include: setting, context skills of the assessor, access to information, as well as the resources available to complete these assessments.

Overall, domestic violence offenders should not be treated as any other offender, and planning by the criminal justice field must take a collaborative approach to address

these offenders as such. Any sentencing strategies, case management plans, or supervision levels should be guided by information from a reliable, validated risk assessment tool. It is important that evidence-based practices are used for assessing domestic violence offenders, and sentencing and supervision responds accordingly. It is imperative that the limited resources available by the criminal justice system are effectively used.

References

Andrews, D. A., & Wormith, S. J. (2000). *Level of service/case management inventory: LS/CMI*. Multi-Health Systems.

Beaupré, P. (2015). Section 2: Intimate partner violence. *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2013*, 22.

Belfrage, H., Strand, S., Storey, J. E., Gibas, A. L., Kropp, P. R., & Hart, S. D. (2012). Assessment and management of risk for intimate partner violence by police officers using the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide. *Law and human behavior*, *36*(1), 60.

Bonta, J. & Andrews, D. (2007). Risk-need-responsivity model for offender assessment and rehabilitation. Pubic Safety Canada.

Bookwala, J., Sobin, J., & Zdaniuk, B. (2005). Gender and aggression in marital relationships: A life span perspective. *Sex Roles*, *52*, 797-806.

Boyce, J., Cotter, A., & Perrault, S. (2014). Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2013. *Juristat*, 3, 85-102.

Brennan, S., Sinha, M., Taylor-Butts, A., & Porter, L. (2011). Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile. *Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Canada*.

Bullock, K., & Condry, R. (2013). Responding to denial, minimization and blame in correctional settings: The 'real world'implications of offender neutralizations. *European Journal of Criminology*, *10*(5), 572-590.

Burczycka, M. (2016). Section 1: Trends in self-reported spousal violence in Canada, 2014. *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile.* Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Bradley, S., O'Sullivan, C. S., Rempel, M., & Moore, S. (2010). *A national portrait of domestic violence courts*. Center for Court Innovation.

Brown, M. F. (2000). Domestic Violence Advocates' Exposure to Liability for Engaging in the Unauthorized Practice of Law. *Colum. JL & Soc. Probs.*, *34*, 279.

Cavanaugh, M. M., & Gelles, R. J. (2005). The utility of male domestic violence offender typologies new directions for research, policy, and practice. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *20*(2), 155-166.

Coleman, D., Peyton, J., & Johnson, K. D. (2003). *Reliability and validity study of the LSI-R risk assessment instrument*. Institute on Crime, Justice and Corrections at the George Washington University.

Hanson, K., Helmus, L., & Bourgon, G. (2007). The validity of risk assessments for intimate partner violence: A meta-analysis. Public Safety Canada.

Hanson, R. K., & Wallace-Capretta, S. M. (2000). *Predicting recidivism among male batterers*. Solicitor General Canada.

Harris, G. T., Hilton, N. Z., & Rice, M. E. (2011). Explaining the Frequency of Intimate Partner Violence By Male Perpetrators Do Attitude, Relationship, and Neighborhood Variables Add to Antisociality?. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *38*(4), 309-331.

Heckert, D. A., & Gondolf, E. W. (2004). Battered women's perceptions of risk versus risk factors and instruments in predicting repeat reassault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *19*(7), 778-800.

Heilbrun, K. (2009). *Evaluation for risk of violence in adults*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Hendricks, B., Werner, T., Shipway, L., & Turinetti, G. J. (2006). Recidivism Among Spousal Abusers Predictions and Program Evaluation. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *21*(6), 703-716.

Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E., Houghton, R. E., & Eke, A. W. (2008). An Indepth Actuarial Assessment for Wife Assault Recidivism: The "Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide". *Law and Human Behavior*, *32*(2), 150–163. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25144614

Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., & Rice, M. E. (2010). *Risk assessment for criminal justice, offender intervention, and victim services*. American Psychological Association.

Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E., Lang, C., Cormier, C. A., & Lines, K. J. (2004). A brief actuarial assessment for the prediction of wife assault recidivism: the Ontario domestic assault risk assessment. *Psychological assessment*, *16*(3), 267.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., & Stuart, G. L. (1994). Typologies of male batterers: three subtypes and the differences among them. *Psychological bulletin*, *116*(3), 476.

Ibrahim, Dyna. (2016). Section 3: Police-reported intimate partner violence. *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014*. Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Kropp, P. R., & Hart, S. D. (2000). The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA) Guide: reliability and validity in adult male offenders. *Law and human behavior*, *24*(1), 101.

Lowenkamp, C. T., Latessa, E. J., & Holsinger, A. M. (2006). The risk principle in action: What have we learned from 13,676 offenders and 97 correctional programs?. *Crime & Delinquency*, *52*(1), 77-93.

Maguire, E. R., & Duffee, D. E. (Eds.). (2015). *Criminal justice theory: Explaining the nature and behavior of criminal justice*. Routledge.

Messing, J. T., & Thaller, J. (2012). The average predictive validity of intimate partner violence risk assessment instruments. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 0886260512468250.

Millar, A., Code, R., & Ha, L. (2009). *Inventory of spousal violence risk assessment tools used in Canada*. [Research and Statistics Division], Department of Justice Canada.

Nicholls, T. L., Pritchard, M. M., Reeves, K. A., & Hilterman, E. (2013). Risk assessment in intimate partner violence: A systematic review of contemporary approaches. *Partner abuse*, *4*(1), 76-168.

Patrick, G., Orton, L., & Wormith, J. S. (2013). The Predictive Validity of the Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment (SPRA).

Rossiter, K. R. (2011). *Domestic violence prevention and reduction in British Columbia (2000-2010)*. Justice Institute of British Columbia.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. (2009). *Saskatchewan Primary Risk Assessment Scoring Manual Adult Corrections* (pp. 1-62).

Shaffer, D. K., Kelly, B., & Lieberman, J. D. (2011). An exemplar-based approach to risk assessment: Validating the risk management systems instrument. *Criminal justice policy review*, *22*(2), 167-186.

Taylor-Butts, A., & Porter, L. (2011). Family related homicides, 2000 to 2009. *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile*, 32-41.

Tibbetts, S. G., & Hemmens, C. (2010). *Criminological Theory.* Thousand Oaks, California. Sage Publications, 2010. Print.

Tutty, L. M., Ursel, E. J., & Douglas, F. (2008). Specialized domestic violence courts: A comparison of models. *What's law got to do with it*, 69-94.

Ulmer, J. C. (2015). The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA): A Validation and Comparison Study for an Oregonian Law Enforcement Agency.

Verdun-Jones, S., Brink, J., Lussier, P., & Nicholls, T. L. (2006). Aggression and violence at the BC Forensic Psychiatric Hospital: Description, prediction,

management and legal issues. *Vancouver, Canada: Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission*.

Walker, S. (2011). Sense and nonsense about crime, drugs, and communities. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Williams, K. R. (2012). Family violence risk assessment: A predictive cross-validation study of the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument-Revised (DVSI-R). *Law and human behavior*, *36*(2), 120.

Wong, S. C., & Gordon, A. (2006). The validity and reliability of the Violence Risk Scale: A treatment-friendly violence risk assessment tool. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *12*(3), 279.

Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E., Lang, C., Cormier, C. A., & Lines, K. J. (2004). A brief actuarial assessment for the prediction of wife assault recidivism: the Ontario domestic assault risk assessment. *Psychological assessment*, *16*(3), 267.