

GRiST rules of thumb

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1 Providing scores for items with a zero to ten scale

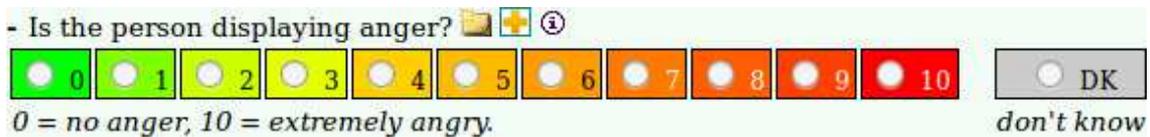


Figure 1: Scale answer for anger showing the comment box and the action box (with a cross on it).

1. Use the descriptors at each end of the scale for a clear definition of how to interpret the maximum and minimum values (see Figure 1).
2. Give the value that feels right and do not agonise about it because it will not improve your intuitive judgement.
3. If a particular behaviour or circumstance is not a problem, then put a zero: it is not contributing to the risks.
4. Spend time on the factors that do influence risks or their management, not on the irrelevant ones for the particular assessment.

2 Comments

1. *Only* provide a comment if it adds to the understanding of that risk item and does not simply repeat what the quantitative answer communicates.
 - (a) There is *no* necessity to provide a comment for every question.
2. Focus comments on the specific question to which they are attached.
 - (a) Don't provide additional information relating to other questions.
 - (b) Trust the GRiST structure to have a more appropriate place for the additional information.
 - (c) Use the search box to find questions.
3. Comments should be brief and to the point: a single short sentence is usually enough or, even better, a key phrase that communicates the issue.

3 Actions or management plans

1. Always put something in the action box if it is something that will help manage the risk issue.
2. Only put something in the action box if it relates to that specific item.
 - (a) Trust the GRiST structure of questions to have a more appropriate place for any related items.
 - (b) Use the general management tab as a temporary “memo pad” so that you can cut and paste actions into a more suitable place when you reach that place.

4 Providing the risk-judgement score

1. Always give a risk judgement unless you have not evaluated the risk at all.
2. The risk judgement is in the context of the normal level of risks applying to the person’s general population (e.g. working-age adults, older adults, or young children). Nobody is risk free but the idea behind the zero for a risk judgement is that it is no different to what one would expect from people in general.
3. The risk judgement should apply to the service-user’s current circumstances.
 - (a) If the person’s circumstances change, then a risk assessment *must* be repeated and it should be done with respect to the new circumstances.
4. Trust your expertise and experience: the GRiST database shows that people make consistent and reliable judgements that accord with each other.
5. Don’t agonise over the exact risk number to provide: the scale from 0 to 10 is designed to allow a margin of error.

5 Providing a risk summary for each risk

In your judgement, what is the risk that the person will attempt suicide? ⓘ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 = no risk, 10 = maximum risk. DK
don't know

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE AN OVERALL COMMENT/MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THIS RISK? 📄

Figure 2: Risk judgement scale for suicide with respectively the risk summary and the risk management text boxes after the question.

1. Use the risk summary box to bring out the key factors that have influenced your judgement of the level of risk.
 - (a) State only those factors that are important for understanding why you gave a particular risk judgement.

- (b) The summary brings attention to the *key issues* that have raised the risk and should *not* simply repeat the information already in the risk report.
- (c) A few sentences or key points should be all you need.
- (d) Concentrate *only* on why you gave the particular risk level *not* how you will manage it.
- (e) If there are no issues raising risk then that is all you need to say. Spend more time on other risks or issues instead.

6 Managing the risk

1. Use the tab for copying into the management box any actions you gave earlier for specific questions.
2. Only provide a management plan that relates to this specific risk.
 - (a) The overall management or safety plan box is used to collate actions across risks.

7 Risk formulation

1. The purpose of the risk formulation is to connect the symptoms of risks, their causes, and the timescales of managing them.
2. The risk formulation should make it easier to ensure the management plan tackles the most urgent immediate problems as well as the longer term reasons for those problems.
3. These longer-term problems *must* be addressed if the person is to avoid a repetition of raised risks on discharge from the particular care episode.

8 Overall risk and safety management

1. When you have evaluated each risk, answered the general questions relating to all risks, and provided a risk formulation, it is time to produce the risk plan for the complete assessment.
2. Collate your summary management plans for each assessed risk with actions from the general questions to produce your overall safety plan.
 - (a) The management tab has a mechanism for copying risk plans and general actions into the safety plan text box.
 - (b) After selecting and copying appropriate ones, edit the box as required.

9 Levels and contexts of assessment

1. Screening

- (a) Use the screening version if the focus is on an initial evaluation of risk levels rather than how to manage them.
- (b) Answer all questions that show up in bold with a “screening” label in front.

2. Full assessment

- (a) The focus is on both evaluating and managing the risks.
- (b) It is often used after an initial screening.
- (c) All risks should be assessed.

3. Repeat assessments

- (a) Not all risks will need reviewing every time.
- (b) Switch off risks that are not being reviewed so that their most recent evaluation will be pulled into the new assessment report.
- (c) It is up to you and/or your organisation to decide how often a risk needs to be reassessed.
 - i. Keep an eye on when each risk was last assessed.
 - ii. Make sure a repeat assessment is done within the agreed maximum time lapse.

4. Rapid repeat assessments

- (a) They are conducted when only those items that can change on a daily basis are reviewed.
- (b) These are the questions with no padlock icons.
- (c) The new “dynamic” version of GRiST has the functionality for showing only these questions and makes the assessment very quick.

5. Assessments recorded in real time with the service user

- (a) Should be done using the dynamic version of GRiST.
- (b) It allows easy access to any questions using a “mind map” overview.
- (c) Ask your organisation how to access it or try it out at www.egrist.org.