



What is YASI?

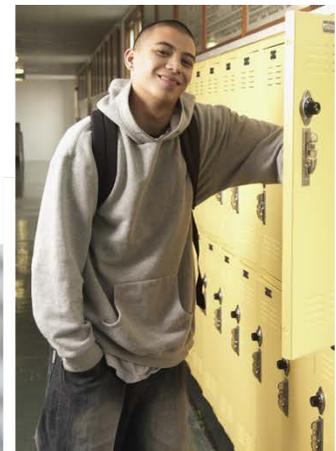
The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI™) measures risk, needs and strengths and helps develop case plans for at-risk youth. It can be used in juvenile probation, detention/secure custody, day reporting, youth services, schools, police diversion and other settings where there is a requirement to assess risk of negative outcomes and identify service needs. The YASI includes a brief "Pre-Screening" version (about 30 items) used to assist in early decision-making and assigning scarce case resources.

Based on a variety of information sources, YASI provides a vehicle for entering and analyzing information collected by juvenile probation officers, youth service managers, police, teachers, social workers and other case managers who assess youth clients.

The YASI brings together a number of exciting new developments in youth assessment:

- improved links to case planning
- Inclusion of strengths
- A sharper focus on dynamic reassessment
- An abridged Pre-Screen for early case decisions.

These developments received a boost from the Washington State juvenile assessment model (CMAP) in the late 90's. Based on the Washington model, YASI benefited from enhancements introduced by Orbis Partners in our earliest implementations in New York and Illinois. YASI is now used statewide in 10 jurisdictions and in numerous county and youth agencies across North America and in some international jurisdictions.





Case Planning is Paramount

Stimulating well-informed, individualized case planning is the critical challenge in youth assessment. Frequently youth service professionals complete risk and need assessments thoroughly, but fail to bring the process forward. All too often assessments are retired to a filing system before review or analysis.

Assessment technology now exists to build efficient instruments for predicting outcomes. The existing research provides clear direction on relevant predictive content for composition of tools. For example, research tells us which characteristics of youth predict recidivism and identifies various dynamic or need factors that must be addressed to build positive outcomes. Research on strengths and developmental assets has taught us how protective factors can buffer the impact of risk. We also know that high risk youth need more services and the services must match their need profiles. Given the state of knowledge about assessment, practitioners are demanding tools that smoothly translate into service action (often referred to as fourth generation tools).

YASI and the accompanying case planning model (Collaborative Case Work™) were designed to meet these challenges.

In adapting the Washington model for new jurisdictions, our goal was to focus on user application - building an assessment interface that helped users *apply* the results. Therefore, a critical feature of YASI is to link assessment results in an immediate way to the process of individualized case planning and appropriate service provision. This is accomplished through:

- A step by step model that incorporates the youth in the case planning process – Collaborative Case Work
- Focus on reassessment for monitoring the progress of case planning and supervision objectives
- Training that emphasizes case planning as the central objective of assessment.
- Case planning software that uses an attractive graphics interface and includes the capacity for more detailed case noting

Our case planning approach outlines discrete steps practitioners can employ to help youth choose appropriate goals and action steps, while developing motivation to follow the plans. The model is contrasted with a case planning approach that automatically selects interventions from a standard menu, or relies only on attempts to enforce court conditions as the primary method for promoting positive behavioral change. The YASI assessment and case planning process is more individualized – matching supervision and intervention strategies with the youth's motivation level and other important individual *responsivity* factors.

Our case planning model has been successfully applied in a number of youth and adult jurisdictions with diverse populations. Over the years, the model has been revised and refined to enhance success. The Collaborative Case Work model consists of the following three components:

- Mapping (assessment)
- Planning (mobilizing youth motivation)
- Reviewing (reassessment, reinforcing change, responding to relapse, managing the plan as it progresses)

YASI and Collaborative Case Work were designed to facilitate individualized case planning and intervention in a way that draws on evidence based practice.

The case planning model is integral to YASI. It emphasizes that assessment is only a first step. Without case planning, assessing risk, needs and strengths have little value on their own. The YASI assessment results drive the case plan. The key objective is to ensure that assessment helps produce good decision-making and the creation of individualized plans to reduce problem behavior.

Case planning begins with an analysis of the results of a YASI assessment. The results help identify the targets of service that are most likely to achieve positive change. Next, there is a focus on how to gain the youth's "buy-in" and develop realistic action steps that will achieve the desired results. As the plan is implemented, ongoing monitoring of the plan and provision of focused support become essential. All of the case planning steps are intimately linked to the YASI, from initial assessment to ongoing dynamic reassessment and documentation of outcomes. All of the steps are built into our CaseWorks™ software platform used for assessment and case planning.

YASI and Collaborative Case Work are driven by the principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR) advanced by Andrews, Bonta and Hoge. In addition, we draw heavily from Motivational Interviewing (MI) to inform both the assessment process and case planning.

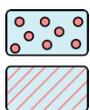


Instrument Design

The Washington Model on which YASI is based was created after extensive consultations with delinquency researchers, experts on juvenile assessment, and leaders in family and youth services. Input from expert sources and close attention to existing research helped shape an exciting new assessment model that capitalized on major advances in the field.

The original model was developed as a collaboration between researchers from the Washington State

Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) and the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators. Involvement and input of staff who worked with youth was a principle element of the design process. This ensured that the style and content of the tool matched the language and intervention methods of users. The result was a state-of-the-art model that combined scientific integrity with a practical appeal that "made sense" to users.



Content and Style of YASI Items

The input of frontline users is reflected in the language of the tool. Many of the items can be rendered as behavioral targets for change that inform the choice or goals and the selection of action steps in case planning. Most of the dynamic items are measured on graduated scales that frequently consist of four or more response options. In this way, users can pinpoint youth problems and strengths on a continuum. In turn, the scales become helpful for measuring change as the youth successfully responds to service plans, experiences setbacks, or achieves only minimal progress.

The language and selection of items balances the need to employ terminology that is most comfortable for users, while ensuring that the content reflects what the current state of research recognizes as valid predictors of outcome. YASI content is being revised on an ongoing basis to incorporate input from users. This helps sharpen item definitions and increases the reliability of the tool.

The YASI domains (or sub-scales) include conventional static factors (usually related to delinquent history or other historical markers), and dynamic factors that have emerged from research on criminogenic needs. The domains also link to a variety of national programs and interventions that were developed through research over the past 20 years. This helps keep YASI in step with the types of services that many jurisdictions are introducing as they build evidence-based service delivery systems.

The 10 YASI domains consist of:

1. Legal History
2. Family
3. School
4. Community/Peers
5. Alcohol/Drugs
6. Mental Health
7. Violence/Aggression
8. Attitudes
9. Adaptive Skills
10. Use of Free Time/Employment

The YASI domains resemble the content of other youth assessment tools that include risk and need factors. This is because research has converged on a number of factors that reliably predict outcomes in youth services. Hence, assessment tool developers have been able to identify a relatively consistent set of assessment items that offer efficiency of prediction. YASI also offers a fresh approach by incorporating the most recent research and the newest measurement advances. Some of the conventional risk and need domains have been re-conceptualized in the YASI (e.g., community/peers, aggression, adaptive skills), while newer research-based items have been introduced to supplement the case planning function.

YASI research has demonstrated that strengths provide predictive information over and above risk and need factors to provide a more complete profile of the youth.



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. A number of intervention strategies have capitalized on these findings and offered theories of "resilience". Protective factors are viewed as helping youth "bounce back" when faced with high risk situations and other adversity. Recent research based on YASI validation studies show that youth at all risk levels appear to benefit from strengths with respect to reductions in recidivism. Our research has also shown that strengths provide predictive information over and above risk and need factors to provide a more complete profile of the youth.

The concept of protective factors is not new! Many practitioners already use "strengths" in planning services to help youth and their families. Yet, the development of assessments for strengths is very new. The YASI now provides probation officers, juvenile correctional workers, and other youth service workers with the ability to assess and monitor strengths using objective measurement techniques.

Highly intuitive for all types of case managers in the youth service field, assessment of strengths focuses case plans in a way that maintains or bolsters protective factors where they already exist, and helps develop new resources for youth who lack strengths. Incorporation of strengths grounds the model in a case planning process that is motivating both for youth and for the professionals who must guide the development of case plans.



Static and Dynamic Factors

Both "static" (historical and unchangeable) and "dynamic" (changeable) factors are included in the YASI. Static factors (e.g., delinquency record) are necessary and efficient predictors of recidivism. Dynamic factors are predictors of recidivism that also point to youth characteristics and behavioral patterns that need to change in order to reduce future problems.

The primary static or historical domain is **Legal History** (e.g., age at first arrest, previous adjudications, detention, probation violations, etc.) There are also some static items in the **Family** (e.g., history of family problems, neglect, etc.), **School** (expulsions), **Mental Health** (e.g., abuse), and **Aggression** (e.g. violent behavior) domains.

Among the more dynamic or changeable factors are:

- **Family** (e.g., positive and negative family influences)
- **School** (e.g., performance, attendance, behavior problems, school attachments, attitudes toward education)
- **Community/Peers** (e.g., positive and negative peer influences, adult role models)
- **Substance Use** (e.g., frequency of alcohol/drug use and alcohol/drug-related problems)
- **Mental Health** (e.g., mental health diagnoses, suicidal ideation)
- **Aggression** (e.g., anger management skills, beliefs about the use of violence)
- **Attitudes** (e.g., pro-social attitudes or lack of empathy, dispositions favorable toward crime, unreceptive toward change)
- **Adaptive Skills** (e.g., deficits or strengths in problem solving, interpersonal skills, and other cognitive skills that normally promote pro-social adjustment)
- **Employment** (e.g., positive experience related to labor market participation) and **Use of Free Time** (e.g., positive structured and unstructured leisure pursuits, pro-social hobbies or other high involvement activities likely to serve as protective factors).

The Importance of Dynamic Factors

Reflecting the importance of targeting "changeable" risk factors according to the need principle, the YASI focuses particular attention on dynamic elements. The dynamic risk factors reflect the youth's "needs" for service or attention in particular problem areas.

Frequently static and dynamic factors are combined in assessment tools, making it difficult to separate the two sources of risk. Yet for reassessment purposes, it is relevant to focus more attention on the factors that are amenable to change. By examining dynamic factors specifically at reassessment, YASI offers a clearer assessment of whether or not the youth's dynamic risk (i.e., need) is increasing, staying the same, or decreasing.

YASI uses a number of measurement techniques to increase the validity and reliability of dynamic assessment. By

providing more response options on a graduated scale for the dynamic items, YASI helps case managers develop greater awareness of potential behavioral targets, monitor change in the targeted areas, and document the change as it occurs.

The Full Assessment YASI produces results for both static and dynamic factors, showing "low", "moderate" and "high" levels of risk and need. However, in order to boost sensitivity for detecting change, the overall dynamic need scores are displayed across 6 levels ("low", "low moderate", "moderate", "moderate high", "high", and "very high"). This classification system also helps identify extreme groupings (e.g., very high need) so that resources can be more efficiently distributed. This is very helpful for allocating services to youth who are most in need, especially where services are at a premium.

Attitudes and Adaptive Skills

The **Attitudes** and **Adaptive Skills** dimensions are often perceived as difficult to measure reliably. Many view such measures as too “subjective”. Yet research consistently shows that anti-social attitudes and characteristics such as poor impulse control skills are among the strongest dynamic predictors of recidivism. YASI employs carefully prescribed semi-structure interview techniques with youth to assess the attitudinal and adaptive skills domains. Using numerous items and multiple response categories for attitudes and adaptive skills resulted in important assessment advances in these critical areas. In turn, these improvements have important links to services and programs. In fact, the attitudes and adaptive skill domains are among the strongest predictors of recidivism within the full battery of YASI items. The **Attitudes** domain links to a number of interventions that target anti-social attitudes and poor motivation. The **Adaptive Skills** domain is beneficial for assessing the need for cognitive skills and other interpersonal skills training. Moreover, both domains have obvious links with targets of cognitive behavioral methods – the type of interventions that research has unequivocally shown to produce the best outcomes with juvenile populations.

While the **Attitudes** and **Adaptive Skills** domains are relatively detailed, this allows YASI to achieve more measurement reliability for reassessments, and also furnishes a more practical range of attitudes and behaviors to target for intervention and monitoring change.

Violence/Aggression

There have been some gains in predicting violent and aggressive behavior in recent years. In order to be responsive to the public’s desire for more scrutiny in this area, many youth service professionals wish to include history of violent behavior in their assessments. YASI includes separate scores for static indicators of violence (e.g., any history) as well as more dynamic markers of future aggressive behavior. The dynamic component is helpful for identifying youth who are likely to benefit from anger management training, programs that focus on reshaping attitudes that promote violent activity, or need more attentive supervision to monitor potentially volatile behavior.

Mental Health and Trauma

It is well-recognized that many youth entering the juvenile justice system suffer in various degrees from mental health problems. As such, the inclusion of mental health in an overall profile of youth risks and needs is critical. While mental health issues may not be predictive of negative juvenile justice outcomes, for many youth mental health issues may be salient responsivity factors. As such YASI displays service need “flags” for youth who may require professional mental health attention.

Research is accumulating on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Many juvenile justice practitioners ask about how they can monitor such experience and address problems revolving around youth trauma. YASI incorporates the majority of standard ACE items that have been used in studies that describe the experience and impact of adverse events among youth. YASI-based studies have shown meaningful links between ACE’s and juvenile justice outcomes. In a future planned upgrade to the CaseWorks™ software, ACE scores will be generated as part of the Full Assessment results.

Another advance is that Orbis Partners was selected by the University of Massachusetts School of Medicine to serve as the exclusive distributors of software for the administration of the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI), a widely validated mental health assessment for juvenile justice clients. By combining YASI and MAYSI users can conduct more rigorous screening for mental health problems among youth receiving juvenile justice services.



Pre-Screen YASI

The YASI includes **Pre-Screen** and **Full Assessment** versions.

The YASI **Pre-Screen** is the primary index used for classification. The Pre-Screen employs a minimum of highly predictive static and dynamic items (about 30 items) that yield classifications of "low", "moderate", and "high" risk of future problem behavior (e.g., delinquent recidivism). The YASI version of the original Washington Pre-Screen was streamlined to contain fewer items and scoring was redesigned to provide predictive generalizability across different jurisdictions.

As a time-saving device, the Pre-Screen rapidly identifies "moderate" and "high" risk cases that will require more intensive services. The Full Assessment is then recommended as a method for developing a detailed profile of the need and strength factors that will become the focus of case planning for moderate or higher risk cases.

As a "triage" approach to identify moderate and higher risk youth, the Pre-Screen helps introduce greater efficiency in assessment and case planning.

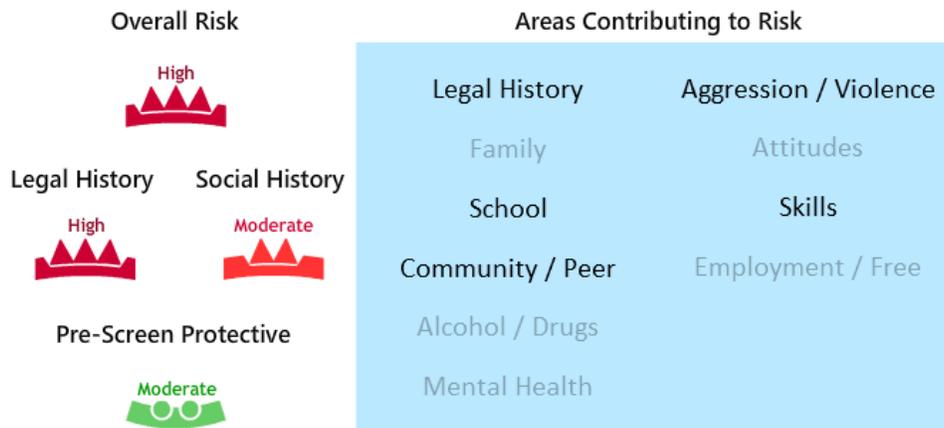
While a brief interview with the youth is necessary for completing the Pre-Screen, information about many of the pre-screen items is also readily available through case files, existing social

histories and other sources of data (e.g., police reports) that may already be accessible when the case manager begins the assessment. The selection of Pre-Screen items was based on the need to include highly predictive items, while recognizing that a streamlined assessment must provide results for decision-making based on a rapid assembly of basic information. Using the YASI software, Pre-Screen results are displayed for Criminal History and Social History based on a classification of "low", "moderate", and "high" risk.

An added advantage of the YASI adaptation of the Washington model is the inclusion of a validated strength measure for the Pre-Screen. The YASI Pre-Screen derives strength levels of low, moderate, or high as a standard component of the results.

The Pre-Screen software also produces a list of key need areas that represent elevated risk (e.g., family, school, substance abuse, attitudes, etc.). While the Pre-Screen is not designed for detailed case planning, it provides ease and efficiency for summarizing case information at the early stages of serving youth.

Examples of software-generated **Pre-Screen** results:





Full-Assessment YASI

The **Full Assessment** builds on the Pre-Screen to provide a substantially more detailed assessment of the needs and strengths that will be considered in building case plans for moderate and higher risk youth.

Again, the Full Assessment contains many items that easily translate into "targets" for action steps in case plans. The Full Assessment ensures that the case plans and the ongoing monitoring of the youth's progress is based on factors that are

behaviorally based and grounded in modern research on high risk youth.

In generating Full Assessment results, the software is designed to deliver an integrated approach to case planning. The results of the full assessment and the case planning steps are conveniently linked with built-in features that encourage in-depth case analysis, tracking of progress, and case-noting.

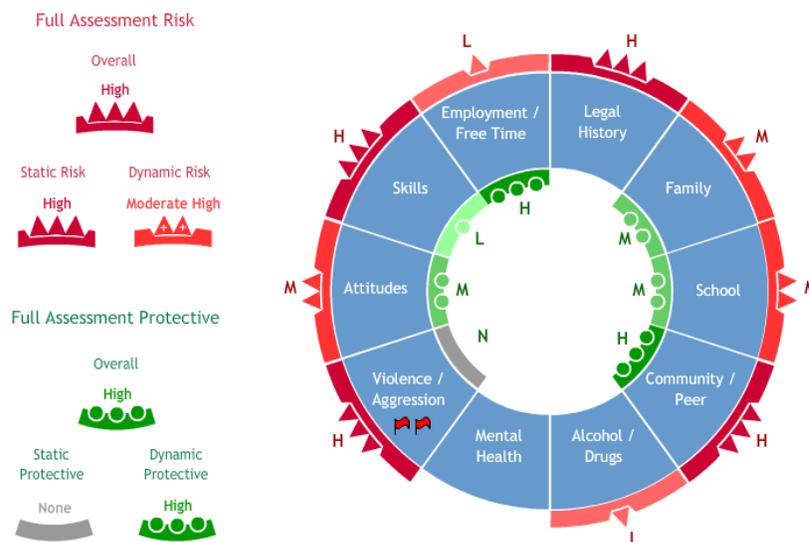


Software

CaseWorks™, the browser-based software platform that delivers YASI, provides a number of useful features for displaying results and aggregating data across multiple caseloads within jurisdictions. The browser software is fully hosted and maintained by Orbis Partners but can also be installed in local network environments. The YASI application is fast, secure, and easy to use. In addition to assessment functionality, a step-by-step feature for building case plans is integrated within the CaseWorks™ platform.

YASI results are shown for overall risk, needs and strengths. Risk/Need and strength levels for each domain (e.g., family, school, peers, attitudes, etc.) are also displayed. In addition, the software breaks down the overall results by static and dynamic sub-totals.

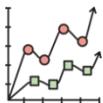
The Full Assessment results are graphically displayed using a "wheel" diagram to illustrate risk, need and strength levels for the various domains. For YASI users, the "wheel" is one of the most popular features of the model (see below). Users click on areas of the wheel that represent potential targets of intervention for the youth's case plan. When a particular domain is selected as a priority, the priority is carried forward throughout the case plan module. Next, users can supply more information about the goals, action steps, and interventions for addressing the priority domains. The software allows case managers to track progress on goals, record referral sources, and enter other relevant case notes.





Narrative Reports - Social History/ Pre-Disposition Reports

Because of the comprehensive content of the Full Assessment, YASI provides a rich source of information for social histories and pre-disposition reports. Based on the items gathered as part of the assessment and entered into the software, users are able to access computer-generated narrative reports that can be customized to suit a variety of juvenile justice and youth service contexts. For example, the narrative supplies a draft report that can be amended to suit the requirements of reports to the court or other officials (e.g., pre-sentence reports). Alternatively, the narrative can be used as part of a referral package used to brief service providers or supervisors. YASI was the first fourth generation assessment tool to include narrative reporting and this feature is highly valued by users across a range of settings. The software offers rapid conversion of the YASI narrative for editing in various word processing applications.



Information Management Potential

Aggregate reporting of assessment statistics is another key function of the YASI software. The richness of the assessment database provides an important and exciting source of information for identifying service gaps, allocating scarce case management resources, and other service planning purposes.

Managers can produce statistics that profile the youth population being served and identify trends in risk and strength levels across the 10 YASI domains. The ability to break down results by a variety of service types (e.g., diversion, status offenders, probation, delinquency prevention groups, etc.) and demographic characteristics of youth (e.g., age, gender) offers vital tools for profiling the diversity of service needs across sub-populations. This function can also generate information relevant for measuring agency performance. Many agencies use CaseWorks statistical data to strengthen grant applications or supply routine reports to funders. The statistical reports include very detailed reporting on YASI reassessments, conveniently showing the percentage of youth that make positive gains, stay the same, or show decline across overall or domain scores.

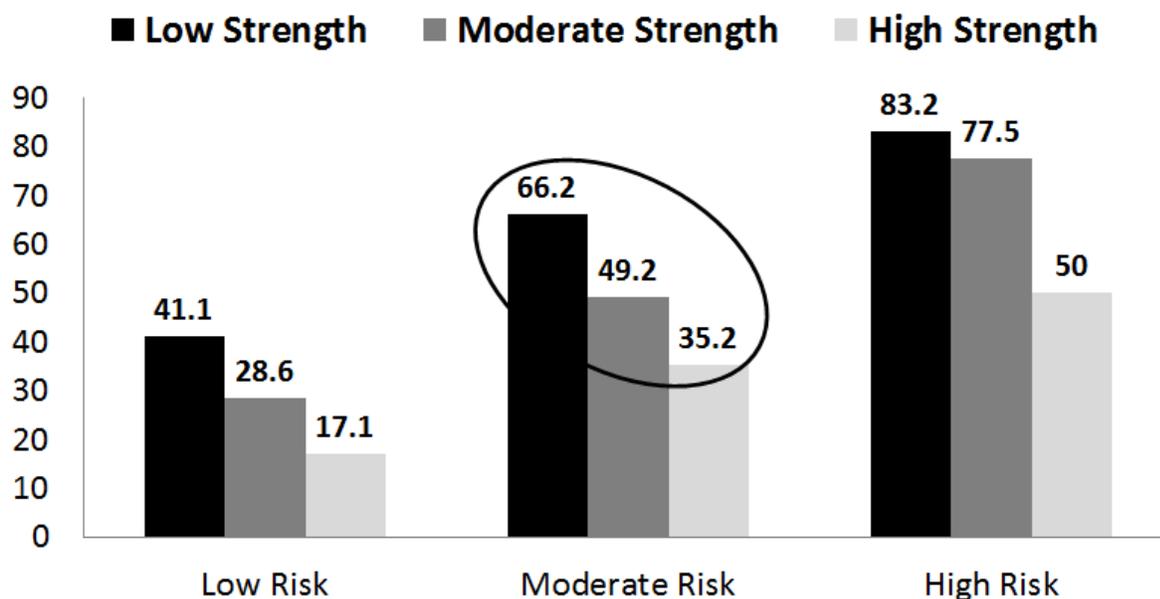
Statistical reports can also help examine caseload characteristics of individual staff. The reporting functionality assesses quality of assessment data (e.g., level of completeness) and assists in performing database maintenance. In future releases of the software, reports will help identify staff who have completed assessments in inconsistent ways and who may need coaching to improve their YASI scoring.



Validation

There are a number of studies focusing on the validity of the Washington Model and the YASI. Based on very large samples in Washington State, the Pre-Screen tool predicted new offenses including misdemeanors, felonies, and violent recidivism in a juvenile probation population. Very positive predictive results were also obtained for Full Assessment scores. Using juvenile delinquent samples in probation settings in Illinois, New York, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Alberta Canada, YASI predicted new referrals for delinquency with very good accuracy. In addition, YASI has predicted outcomes for status offenders (e.g., negative outcome at service closure, new legal involvement, arrests). The tool also appropriately discriminates between youth on diversion and on formal supervision (e.g., adjudicated versus diverted youth). The resilient effects of strength factors have also been confirmed in YASI studies. In the bar chart of the following page, the buffering effects of strength are shown to operate across low, moderate, and high risk cases. A list of studies and scholarly presentations that report results for YASI are included at the end of this document.

Any Negative Outcome by YASI Risk and Strength Levels over 12 months (n=2,712 youth probationers)



In addition to validation, information is available on the reliability of YASI assessments. Reliability speaks to the issue of consistency of YASI scoring across staff. In a major study comparing nine juvenile assessment tools used in the United States by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, YASI ranked among the top tools with regard to inter-rater reliability. Similar evidence of inter-rater reliability was demonstrated in a research study where YASI was used in combination with a series of research tools by academic researchers. More recently, Orbis Partners has explored the consistency of scoring of YASI assessments using large assessment databases that include outcome data. The research helped illuminate common scoring errors and identify staff who exhibited higher rates of inaccurate assessments. As a result of this work we were able to validate a protocol for assessing the accuracy of scoring by individual assessors. In the future, Orbis will introduce software functionality that will alert staff to possible scoring inconsistencies as they conduct assessments and provide supervisors with information about staff who need additional coaching and support.



Gender Responsive Assessment

In most validation samples YASI performed equally well for girls and boys. Given that girls normally recidivate at lower rates than boys, some adjustments were made to cut-off scores to ensure that girls and boys exhibited similar probabilities of recidivism across low, moderate, and high risk levels. More recently, large YASI follow-up samples have allowed Orbis the opportunity to develop separate item weights for girls and boys scores. The new weights reflect variations in how some of the domains predict outcomes across gender. This work, which involves cross-validation across two large samples, will allow Orbis to introduce more gender responsive scoring for YASI in the near future.



YASI Training: On-site and eTraining

Proper training for use of the YASI is essential. The Collaborative Case Work (CCW) training is normally conducted in two stages. An initial two-day training focuses on how to conduct YASI assessments: collecting the necessary information through interviews, case records and collateral contacts. The training prepares users to return to their work settings and begin to complete YASIs and generate results with the CaseWorks software. The second two-day follow-up training is devoted entirely to case planning using YASI. Participants develop an enhanced case management skill set to work with youth to set goals and commit to action steps that match the needs identified with YASI.

We have learned that staff are most receptive to trainers who can explain how to use assessment based on their first-hand experience with clients. There is also a demand to provide information about the scientific fundamentals on which the model is based. Orbis Partners carefully chooses training teams to supply a blend of practical field expertise along with knowledge of the research elements of YASI. Every effort is made to present the material in a way that is accessible for staff with different learning styles and varying interests in the more technical aspects of the model. Our training strategy delivers dynamic presentations using attractive training materials and employing exercises that build participant skills.

The research-based principles of risk, needs and responsivity inform all of the training and effectively link the components of assessment, supervision, and case planning. Throughout the initial and follow-up trainings, a motivational approach to working with youth is also reinforced. Attention to motivational techniques includes interview skills for completing the YASI as well as engaging the youth in building meaningful case plans.

Advances made in Motivational Interviewing (MI) and an understanding of the concept of client change supply an essential foundation for our training. We use video demonstrations of YASI interviews and case planning sessions and a variety of skill-building practices. Many jurisdictions have already embraced MI as a foundation skill. For staff already initiated in MI, the training reviews how the skills are used for both assessment and case planning with YASI. Staff who have not yet been introduced to MI learn how efficient the methods are for obtaining quality assessment information and for eliciting the youth's support.

Introduced in 2012 as a cost-efficient alternative, an e-Training option is also available to replace or supplement on-site training. Some jurisdictions have too few staff to warrant the delivery of on-site training. Other jurisdictions seek solutions to provide ongoing training for new staff after initial implementation. Some of our clients look for refresher training options that will help their staff maintain excellence in assessment and case planning. For some clients, our eTraining offering provides a viable solution to meet their needs.

The eTraining course features audio and video content, quizzes and module tests so that participants can receive feedback on their mastery of the material. The eTraining course takes an average of 12 to 14 hours to complete and each participant can pursue the online content at their own pace and schedule. The online course includes both assessment and case planning components of CCW, and participants are introduced to the various components of the CaseWorks software application.



Customization and Integration

Because of the predictive robustness of the content of the YASI model, the items can be customized for specific youth service contexts. A critical ingredient of implementation success is using language that reflects local practice, thereby promoting credibility and trust in the tool. The wording of YASI items can sometimes be modified to reflect local practice and preferences. Ultimately, instrument customization benefits YASI users across different jurisdictions. YASI was customized for many jurisdictions in the United States, Canada, Scotland and Australia. Helpful advances that emerge through customization in one

jurisdiction are shared with others. Orbis can also develop customized functions within the CaseWorks application to help jurisdictions meet their needs for data capture and reporting.

The CaseWorks software used to deliver YASI and case planning can also be integrated with other client information systems in order to reduce duplication and promote more efficient access for staff. In addition to the convenience of such features as single sign-on, integration can be used to pre-populate selected YASI data fields that already exist in larger client information databases. Demographic information, legal history and other YASI-relevant content can be transferred seamlessly to the corresponding data elements in YASI. In addition, unique data elements stored in CaseWorks including YASI assessment results can be transmitted to the larger client database for reporting and other purposes. Orbis works with clients to define the requirements and scope of integration and customizes solutions to meet unique data requirements. Our VP of Product Management helps clients define their customization and integration needs and coordinates the required work with our software development team.



The Validation Component of Implementation

The implementation of YASI (or any risk/need assessment model) can benefit from a validation process to assess reliability and validity. Using validation research as an integral component of implementation can provide users with valuable descriptive information about the population being assessed. Staff will exhibit significantly more “buy-in” when they receive feedback on their data and understand how the tool is working in their setting. A validation process allows for adjustments to the instrument to ensure that it is performing at maximum efficiency. With validation, cut-off scores for YASI domains can be adjusted to ensure optimal functioning within a jurisdiction. Validation also promotes quality assurance because it helps identify potential difficulties that can arise when the tool is not being administered reliably. If desirable, Orbis can help jurisdictions facilitate the validation process.



Implementation Support

How can organizations derive maximum utility from assessment and capitalize on the potential efficiencies? Many organizations find themselves alone after receiving intensive training on how to administer a new assessment device. Questions remain about how the tool should work in the jurisdiction and how local practices should be adjusted to make room for successful implementation. There are frequently questions about the likely distribution of risk levels and how it might depart from the distribution delivered by an existing tool. Other questions include how to transition from a previous tool, how decisions should be made about service allocations, how assessment scores can be linked to current services, how frequently reassessments should be administered, and whether customization can be considered for certain items. There are also many concerns about how to manage staff resistance to the introduction of assessment.

Orbis Partners strives to provide project managers and users with the necessary support to adjust to inevitable challenges that arise with a new assessment and case planning approach. Supportive activity is crucial before training, during training and following training.

Before training the support focuses on assessing training needs and helping managers determine the steps for preparing a YASI implementation plan. *During* training the support focuses on helping staff learn the assessment procedures and develop confidence in their ability to apply the skills. *Following* training support shifts to providing ongoing coaching and reinforcement for the implementation of the model. This includes consultation on how to adapt the model to the jurisdiction's unique needs, promoting quality assurance, and supplying information management assistance to make the best use of aggregate assessment data.

Through accessible software support, consulting on the application of the model for a variety of practical problems, and providing data feedback, Orbis Partners helps maintain project momentum. Toll-free telephone and e-mail support, e-Training, webinars, and site visits are among the support vehicles used.

In order to boost implementation efforts, Orbis has developed a specialized curriculum that is addressed specifically to supervisors. Supervisors find themselves in a unique position: they frequently do not conduct assessment and case planning activities with YASI on a routine basis, yet they are expected to supervise the performance of this work among their staff! The Supervisor Training series helps supervisors learn fundamentals of how to support their staff during implementation. Supervisors learn how to observe and coach their staff in the use of YASI and the CCW model. The supervisor sessions also provide participants with the ability to trouble-shoot implementation issues by brainstorming with their colleagues.

In recent years Orbis has embraced a coaching model aimed at helping staff, individually and in groups, grapple with issues of skill acquisition and implementation fidelity. Our experience has shown that coaching can be conducted effectively both on-site and online. Our coaching focuses on providing feedback and support on the assessment and case planning work of individual staff. We provide direct coaching support to individual staff as well as help develop internal coaching resources among supervisors and other staff who can provide leadership and support to their colleagues.



Cost

The YASI can be made available to jurisdictions in service packages that might include customization, training, software, technical support, application consulting, coaching, quality assurance and validation/research services. Based on hosted solutions or licensed applications on the client's network, the Caseworks software includes unlimited use of the assessment tool for initial assessments and reassessments. Jurisdictions may also opt for a train-the-trainer certification process in order to meet the demand for ongoing training or include eTraining in the service package.



YASI Implementation Team

The YASI team consists of experts in assessment and programming with many years of experience in youth and adult human service fields. Combining both research and clinical skills, as well as state-of-the-art software development, the team has benefited from the practical experience of implementing assessment tools and other programs in a variety of settings across North America, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Orbis Partners maintains a full-time staff complement who are responsible for ongoing research, training, software development, and technical support. Part-time associates who actively deliver services to youth or supervise front-line staff also contribute to training on assessment and case planning. The dynamic team that has been assembled by Orbis Partners is well resourced to provide rapid response to support implementation.



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