

OREGON JCP ASSESSMENT (2006.1) TRAINING AND INTER-RATER RELIABILITY EXERCISES

These practice vignettes have been developed for self-training on the Oregon JCP Assessment (2006.1). These vignettes can also be used to promote inter-rater reliability within an agency.

Self-Training Instructions

- A. Read instructions for completing a JCP Risk Assessment
- B. Review the “Sample Interview Questions.” The vignettes report information you would expect to obtain from a youth interview that used these or similar questions to obtain the specific information required by the assessment. The interview information is augmented with information from parents and agency records.
- C. Complete the assessment (for the purpose of the self-training use a hard copy form) for the first sample vignette. Compare your ratings to the answer key provided.
- D. Use the additional vignette(s) for practice, or use them in combination with the “Inter-Rater Reliability Comparison Exercise” described below to promote inter-rater reliability within your agency.

Inter-Rater Reliability Exercise

Inter-rater reliability means that if two (or more) people use the same tool (such as the risk assessment) they will get similar results on the same youth. That is, if you and your colleague both were to gather information and complete the risk assessment on the same youth, you would get the same answers and you would agree on the risk level of that youth. Inter-rater reliability relies on the tool itself, as well as on the interview questions and methods used to gather the information, including the experience and skill of the person completing the tool. Because all youth are different and the tool is intentionally brief, there may be room for interpretation on some questions about whether a particular youth has a particular risk or protective indicator. The inter-rater reliability exercise provides an opportunity for you to work with your colleagues and identify places where you can clarify local policy and come to agreement around how to interpret the intent of the risk assessment questions.

- A. Using the “Inter-Rater Reliability Form,” compare your results with others in your department who have completed risk assessments based on the sample vignettes. The “Inter-Rater Reliability Form” can also be used by the agency coordinator to summarize similarities and differences among screeners.
- B. After completing the comparison exercise, discuss as a staff those items that you think require clarification, and explain what is confusing, conflicting, or otherwise contributes to differences in scoring. What are some of the reasons for the differences?
- C. Are there any items where obtaining consistent, uniform information could lead to poor inter-rater reliability? For example, is there a uniform method for obtaining information about school performance?
- D. Does your agency have consistent guidelines regarding the number and types of information sources that should be used to complete an initial assessment?

E. Are there internal decision rules that your department will develop to guide scoring decisions in order to obtain maximum uniformity? If so, what are they?

Vignette #1: Ron

Ron is a 15-year-old white male who was referred to the juvenile department for Criminal Mischief I for “keying a car.” The car belonged to another boy whom he got in a fight with, over a girl both boys were dating. Ron owes over \$3,000 restitution to the victim. He feels his behavior was justified and is angry about having to pay money to a guy who tried to steal his girl. Ron had one prior referral for Theft II at age 13, and three runaway episodes that occurred between ages 12 and 13, each of which involved extended absences from home. There have been no runaways in the past year. There is no history of fire setting, harming or injuring animals, or interest in weapons.

Ron is currently failing more than half of his classes. He has not been diagnosed with any learning disability, and has achieved average grades in the past. Now he rarely completes his work and is tardy or truant at least once a week. School records show he was identified as high risk prior to entering high school because of chronic disruptive behavior that began in fourth grade (at age 9). He was suspended a year ago for fighting. **School officials report concerns that Ron has shown a pattern of being impulsively aggressive toward other students. School referrals indicate these behaviors have been identified as bullying others** but there have been no suspensions or other destructive behavior at school in the past six months. His mother says she has tried to help Ron with homework, and that she has called his teachers to discuss his frequent absences. The girl Ron has been dating is doing community service for a shoplifting offense and is failing in school, but she has never been suspended or expelled. **She does not have any history of drug or alcohol use. Ron** has no other friends.

Ron has a very unstable home life. His father has been in the adult criminal justice system for trafficking narcotics. His mother is a recovering alcoholic who works at a bait and tackle shop for minimum wage. She has been alcohol free now for approximately nine months. Both Ron and his mother say they have a close relationship, but he mother admits she rarely knows where Ron is or what he’s doing, and feels she has little ability to influence his behavior. Ron’s father lost his job **two months ago**, and has a history of chronic unemployment. A lack of adequate income appears to be putting significant stress on this family. Family members have difficulty communicating with each other. Ron reports that there is a lot of yelling and fighting at home between his parents, and between him and his father. Court records show that Ron was in foster care twice because of neglect and domestic violence, but none has been reported in the past year. Ron is unhappy about his family’s financial pressures and yelling. He couldn’t identify any adult in his life now or in the past year that he can talk to. However, he said he had talked a lot to a foster father he had a couple of years ago, and felt supported and appreciated when he was with him.

His family lives in a low-income trailer park in a neighborhood with a known high crime rate. **Ron states that it makes him nervous to be home alone and he doesn’t associate with his neighbors.** He uses marijuana regularly and has been drunk over one hundred times over the past 3 years, including several times at school. **Ron reports that the first time he used marijuana he was 12 years old.** He says that he likes to smoke marijuana and drink alcohol because it helps him forget about his “crappy life.” He admits to driving under the influence on numerous occasions, including in the past month. His mother suggests that Ron’s use of marijuana is affecting his motivation to do well in school.

Ron says he's thought of suicide but hasn't made any attempts, and has never made any concrete plans to kills himself. He reports no problems with sleeping, eating, or hallucinations. **He was recently evaluated by a counselor and was not diagnosed with**

depression. Ron often misinterprets adults who are trying to help him as “out to get him.” He views being held accountable as hostile and mean.

He has no goals at this point in his life. Ron isn't involved in any constructive extra-curricular activities. However, he says he used to fish a lot, and wouldn't mind fishing again, but it would be nice to have a friend to go with. Both he and his mother expressed pride in his fishing expertise.

Vignette #2: Ricardo

Ricardo is 12 years old. He has become involved with the Juvenile Department after a referral from the police department for Criminal Mischief II. Ricardo and a friend put graffiti on the side of a grocery store. Ricardo's parents saw the spray paint in his room and made him go to the police and tell them what happened. Ricardo's parents are very cooperative and want Ricardo to “learn his lesson.” Ricardo states that feels very sorry for what he did and takes responsibility for his poor choice. Ricardo's parents state they had had no problems with him until he started “hanging out” with his friend Travis. They feel that Travis is a bad influence on him because Travis' parents do not regulate who he's with or what he's doing. Travis does not have any friends who use drugs or alcohol.

Ricardo is enrolled in middle school and is a 'B' student. School records show he attends regularly. He is actively involved in soccer and plays saxophone in the school band. His parents help him with his homework when needed, and let him know how proud they are of his achievements. Neither he nor any of his close friends have ever been suspended, and he has friends who do well academically. Ricardo's close friends were surprised by this incident and disappointed in Ricardo's behavior. Ricardo communicates well with the school staff and his parents, but had this one incident that surprised everyone.

Ricardo has not experimented with drugs or alcohol. His home is free of drug abuse, though his father does drink moderately while watching soccer matches at home with his friends. Ricardo's parents are American citizens although they emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. Ricardo understands Spanish, but his primary language is English. Ricardo's neighborhood is tight-knit and the residents watch out for each other. Ricardo reports that he likes his neighbors and feels safe in his neighborhood. Once the members of his neighborhood were aware of the graffiti incident, they offered to help Ricardo's parents in any way they could. One adult neighbor is particularly close to Ricardo, and has offered to help him paint over the graffiti. Ricardo states that he feels close to his neighbor and feels like he can talk about anything with this neighbor.

Neither Ricardo nor his parents report any serious family conflicts, and there is no official or self-reported history of child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or familial criminal history. However, Ricardo's younger sister was diagnosed with leukemia about 5 months ago, and both Ricardo and his parents reported that this has been very difficult for all of them.

Ricardo is no longer allowed to hang out with Travis. Ricardo's parents have noticed that he has had a difficult time sleeping and seems to be dwelling on the incident. He says he feels very ashamed of his behavior, and is concerned about having disappointed his parents and neighbors, but hasn't had any thoughts of suicide. He does not show signs of being depressed

or **withdrawn**. Ricardo has no history of running away, impulsiveness, aggressiveness, fire setting, preoccupation with weapons, or learning disabilities. **Ricardo understands that his parents and law enforcement are trying to help him. He has a goal to graduate high school and go to college.**

Vignette #3: Lisa

Lisa is a 16-year-old African-American female. She lives at home with her mother and her two younger brothers. Lisa is a single mother and has an infant son who is six months old. Lisa gets no support from the Michael, the 17-year-old father of the baby because he is in a youth correctional facility on five counts of burglary. She was referred to the Juvenile Department for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. She took her cousin's car without permission to visit Michael, thinking she'd be back before her mother and cousin returned from a trip to the beach. She was arrested in the stolen vehicle and was placed in the detention facility. That resulted in her infant son being placed temporarily in protective custody, which was very traumatic for her. This is her first referral of any kind, and there is no history of any prior problem behaviors such as running away, hurting herself or others, **misinterpreting others actions as hostile** or impulsivity. **Lisa admits that she should not have taken the car without permission and is sorry for any trouble that it caused her cousin.**

Though it is a challenge to find time for her daughter because of her two younger sons and her full time job at the thrift shop, Lisa's mother has been very supportive of her daughter throughout her pregnancy and adjustment to motherhood. Lisa says she talks with her mother nearly every day, and appreciates her encouragement and guidance. Her mother says she nearly always knows where Lisa is and whom she is with. Lisa had asked permission to visit Michael, but the mother assumed she would be taking the bus. When she and the cousin returned home to find the car missing, it did not even occur to her that Lisa might have taken it. There are no reports of abuse, neglect, serious family conflicts, or domestic violence. Lisa's parents divorced several years ago, and her father, who has no apparent criminal or substance abuse history, lives in another state.

Lisa has not attended school since her son was born and states that she is going to begin home schooling, but has not shown any initiative to gather the information or begin the process.

She says her mom quit school after 8th grade, and has never helped her much with homework, or shown much interest in her education. Lisa attended school regularly prior to her son's birth, however, getting mostly B's and C's, and had never been in trouble at school.

Lisa has experimented with alcohol, but not with narcotics. **Her first use was at age 12.** Both mother and daughter deny any regular use, either currently or in the past, but Lisa says her boyfriend was a regular user, and had been suspended at least once for going to school high on marijuana. **Lisa never went to school under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**

Lisa's family moved a year ago and they do not know very many people. They have a minimal support system and know very few neighbors. **Lisa reports seeing police in her neighborhood often and does not feel that it is a safe place for her son to grow up.** Lisa feels depressed quite often while at home with her son because she knows her peers are living an active teenage lifestyle. Before she became pregnant and moved to a new neighborhood, she enjoyed singing in her church choir but now has no outside activities of any kind. She made only a few friends at her new school, but she said one friend was on the honor role. **She reported that one of her friends regularly used drugs and alcohol but she does not spend time with that friend since the birth of her son.** She frequently stays up until early in the morning and sleeps most of the day with her son. She eats very little and has lost weight. Lisa's mother is concerned because Lisa has been increasingly withdrawn and irritable since her baby's birth. **Lisa does not have thoughts of suicide or a plan for suicide. Lisa does not talk about plans for her future and can not identify any goals for her life.**

Vignette #4: Robert

Robert is a 15-year-old male who identifies as Klamath and Paiute; he is an enrolled member of the Klamath Tribes. He lives with his mother, father, older sister, younger brother, and grandmother. Robert's mother is a teacher and makes sure to ask about his homework every day. She attends parent-teacher conferences. Robert's father works the night shift, but is as involved as he can be, given his schedule. Robert's grandfather, who he was very close to, died of complications from diabetes three years ago. Robert lives in a small town with many relatives who live nearby. It is commonly known to be a safe and close-knit community. There does not appear to be conflict in the home and none of his immediate family members have a criminal record. There is no documentation of neglect or abuse of Robert or his siblings. Robert enjoys fishing, hunting, and camping; he pays respect to animals he has killed. Beyond these activities, he has not harmed or injured animals or used weapons. Robert hopes to graduate from high school and get a good-paying job. He is not sure what job he would be most interested in. He does not currently participate in any extra-curricular activities at school, though he used to play J.V. basketball.

Robert was referred to the Juvenile Department for Arson II and MIP charges. Robert was intoxicated at a party and started a field on fire. He claims it was a campfire that grew out of control when he stopped attending to it. Robert then got into a car with other youth who had also been drinking, though he was not the one driving. Robert was arrested and placed in detention where he remains pending his settlement hearing. He has expressed regret for the incident and relief that no one was hurt. Other youth who attended the party were arrested for disorderly conduct, DUI, and MIP. Robert's parents are actively involved with the process and are willing to provide whatever intervention is needed. Robert has had no previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

Robert has a learning disability and is on an IEP, but still lacks the credits to be where he needs to be towards graduation. Robert attends school every day, but he is unable to stay focused on his schoolwork. The teachers like Robert, but report that he is quiet and not willing to share personal information with them. They feel they have not been able to reach him or engage him in school. He has never been a trouble-maker at school, and has never been suspended.

Robert was introduced to alcohol at a friend's house when he was 13 and took a liking to it. His father drinks occasionally with friends or at home, but does not permit his children to drink; his mother does not drink. Robert has told friends that he wishes he could drink every day because it mellows him out. His parents are unaware the Robert has consumed alcohol on many occasions. Robert states that his use of alcohol has always been on weekends, and that he has not tried other drugs. Robert's parents have noticed that this year in particular he seems less interested in his friends and spends most of his time playing violent video games, such as "Grand Theft Auto." Several friends from his prior peer group have dropped out of school or spent time in juvenile detention. However, he does have a childhood friend who he still sees at school who gets mostly A's and B's. His sister does well in school and is getting ready to graduate. In addition to his parents, he reports a close relationship with his grandmother and says she is someone who has provided guidance and advice to him in the past.

Robert reports no difficulty sleeping or eating. He says he was depressed after his grandfather died, but has never considered suicide. He is very concerned that he has embarrassed and worried his family by being arrested and placed in detention. He was open to discussing community service opportunities and is willing to participate in a substance abuse assessment.