



## **Maine Guidelines & General Scoring Criteria**

- For use with Criminal History Record Information & other documentation
- Includes questions for victim interview



# **Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment**

**2019**



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The ODARA Item Guidelines, Scoring Instructions, and Interpretation/Reporting Recommendations are adapted from the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment General Scoring Criteria, 2005 Revised Edition, and the ODARA 101 Electronic Training Program, with permission from the developers: N. Zoe Hilton, Grant T. Harris, Marnie E. Rice, Carol Lang, and Catherine Cormier from the Research Department of the Mental Health Centre Penetanguishene (now Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care) and Kathryn J. Lines of the Ontario Provincial Police Behavioural Sciences Section.<sup>1</sup> The 2019 revisions to this booklet are approved by ODARA lead author N. Zoe Hilton.

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<sup>1</sup> See Hilton, Harris & Rice, Risk Assessment for Domestically Violent Men, American Psychological Association, 2010. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition forthcoming.

## MAINE LAW

An Act to Adopt the Use of Standardized Risk Assessment in the Management of Domestic Violence Crimes, PL 680, 2012:

- Effective January 1, 2015, law enforcement officers must make a good faith effort to administer a validated, evidence-based domestic violence risk assessment recommended by the Maine Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse and approved by the Department of Public Safety. 19-A MRS §4012(6).

Based on a study of domestic violence risk assessment tools, the Maine Commission recommended the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool, which was approved by the Department of Public Safety in 2012.

- Effective January 1, 2015, the law enforcement officer administering this assessment shall provide the results of the assessment to the bail commissioner, if appropriate, and the district attorney for the county in which the abuse took place. 19-A MRS §4012(6).
- Effective January 1, 2015, bail commissioners may not set bail in a qualifying domestic violence case without making a good faith effort to obtain the results of a validated, evidence-based domestic violence risk assessment [ODARA] conducted on the alleged abuser when the results are available. 15 MRS §1023(4)(C)(6).
- Judicial Officers setting bail shall take into account any evidence that the defendant poses a danger to the safety of others in the community, including the results of a validated, evidence-based domestic violence risk assessment [ODARA]. 15 MRS §1026(4)(C)(9-A).
- Liability: The administration of the domestic violence risk assessment ... or the failure to administer the assessment does not subject any state, municipal or county official or employee to liability in a civil action. 34-A MRS §5404(3-A).

## ODARA: WHAT IS IT?

The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) is an actuarial tool that indicates the likelihood that a male or female offender who has already committed an assault on a **current or former intimate (married/unmarried, cohabiting/not living together) or dating partner in a heterosexual relationship** will do so again in the future. ODARA is not yet validated for use with same-sex intimate partnerships.

**The ODARA is administered by law enforcement officers following an arrest determination**, and involves using information gathered through the course of an investigation to score 13 objective items to evaluate an offender's likelihood of recidivism. Each of these items significantly and independently predicts recidivism.

The 13 ODARA items include domestic and non-domestic criminal history, threats and confinement during the index incident, children in the relationship, substance abuse, and barriers to victim support. Each item is scored "0" if absent, "1" if present, or "?" if documentation indicates it might be present but the information is unclear or ambiguous. The Raw Score is the sum of the items. The Final/Adjusted Score is the Raw Score adjusted for any unclear or ambiguous items.

**The Index Incident:** To score the ODARA, the officer first identifies the "index incident" or "index assault" – the most recent incident documented in a police record in which the person being assessed assaulted his or her current or former heterosexual intimate or dating partner. The incident must involve an eligible crime, an eligible relationship, and an arrest determination.

**Eligible crimes:** The Index Incident must involve an "assault" defined as either: (1) "any act of violence that involved physical contact with the victim, or (2) a credible threat of death with a weapon in hand made in the presence of the victim." Therefore, eligible Maine crimes include domestic violence assault (also aggravated assault, elevated aggravated assault), domestic violence criminal threatening with a dangerous weapon, and domestic violence terrorizing if the incident includes the above required circumstances. Other crimes are not eligible for ODARA.

**Eligible relationships:** Current or former heterosexual intimate or dating partners only. Other family or household member relationships are not eligible for ODARA; it should not be used in cases involving siblings, parents and children, grandparents/grandchildren, or other family or household members.

**Sources of Information to Score the ODARA:** Officers use information from victim interviews, criminal history record checks, and other available sources. ODARA is intended to be administered as part of documenting the investigation at the scene or when writing a report.

**Multiple Incidents Rule:** Each police incident report counts as a separate incident (i.e., two reports within 24 hours count as two incidents). If another assault is included in the same report as the index assault, it counts as a prior incident only if it occurred at least 24 hours before the index assault.

**General Note:** ODARA does not include all of the validated, evidence-based high risk or lethality factors that predict risk to the victim. A person with a low ODARA score may also present high-risk behaviors such as strangulation, suicidality, or sexual assault, for example, making them appropriate for high risk responses. In addition, a low ODARA score may result from inaccessible criminal history information about the offender. Other barriers to gaining information about the offender and the victim may exist, such as cultural or language barriers. Effective use of ODARA always depends on officers administering the ODARA, and bail commissioners and judges requiring and relying on ODARA, in cases involving eligible crimes and relationships.

## ODARA ITEM GUIDELINES

**1. Prior Domestic Incident of Assault in a Police or Criminal Record:** Count any incident in which the person being assessed assaulted his/her current or former intimate or dating partner and/or that victim's child, and which is recorded in a police report or criminal record.

- ✓ Pre-index incident must have been reported to the police (either at time of assault or by subsequent report) and occurred on a separate occasion before the index assault.
  - ✓ If the pre-index assault is part of a cluster of assaults documented in one police report, count any assault that occurred at least 24 hours before the index assault as a prior domestic incident.
  - ✓ "Assault" for the purposes of this item is defined as physical contact or the use or attempted use of a weapon to contact the victim's body, or a threat of harm made with a weapon in hand.
  - ✓ If you do not have a detailed description of the incident, count a criminal charge of assault or other violent offense against a domestic victim as a domestic incident.
  - ✓ An arrest or conviction is not necessary.
  - ✓ If the available documentation indicates that an item might be present, but the information is unclear or ambiguous, the item may be scored with a "?".
  - ✓ A criminal history record check is advised for this item.
- 
- x Does not count incidents involving only pets or property.
  - x Does not count incidents involving only strangers, friends, parents, siblings, or other family members.

**2. Prior Non-Domestic Incident of Assault in a Police or Criminal Record:** Count any incident in which the person being assessed assaulted on a separate occasion any person other than his/her current or former intimate or dating partner or that person's child, and which is recorded in a police report or criminal record.

- ✓ “Assault” for the purposes of this item is defined as physical contact or the use, or attempted use of a weapon to contact the victim’s body, or a threat of harm made with a weapon in hand.  
If you don’t have the details of the previous assault, count a criminal charge of assault or violent incident against someone other than a current or former intimate or dating partner or the partner’s child as a prior non-domestic incident and score this item a “1.” However, it must have been reported to the police, and occurred on a separate occasion before the index incident.
- ✓ If the pre-index assault is reported in the same report as the index assault, count it as a prior incident only if it occurred at least 24 hours before the index assault.
- ✓ A criminal history record check is advised for this item.
  
- x Does not include incidents involving only pets or property.
- x Does not include incidents involving only a current or former intimate or dating partner or their child.

**3. Prior Custodial Sentence of 30 Days or More:** A final disposition of a court for an offense committed by the person being assessed if at least 30 days.

- ✓ The abusive partner must have been admitted to an adult or juvenile facility (jail, prison, detention center or state forensic facility such as Riverview) for some part of the sentence, but does not have to have served the entire 30-day or more sentence.
- ✓ This item includes sentences served for a continuous period, or intermittently.
- ✓ Any offense counts; not limited to domestic violence offenses.
  
- X Do not count sentences that are all suspended.
- X Do not count time spent in custody waiting to go to court, unless specifically included as part of the sentence (“time served”).

**Examples:** If the sentence was 364 days, all suspended, do not count. But if it was 364 days, all suspended except for 30, count this item. Also, if the sentence was 364 days, all suspended except for 10, with credit for 20 days served prior to the sentencing, count this item.

**4. Failure on Prior Conditional Release:** Count any known violation of a conditional release, whether or not it resulted in a report to police, arrest, or charge. The person must have been on liberty in the community under supervision/other requirement of a criminal court, or subject to a protection order.

- ✓ Count violations of bail, deferred disposition, probation, or a Protection From Abuse/no-contact order imposed by a court.
- ✓ Count if index assault itself was a conditional release violation.
- ✓ Victim statements are sufficient to score this item.
- ✓ Any offense counts; not limited to domestic violence offenses.
  
- x Does not include conditional release failures that occurred on a separate occasion after the index assault.
- x Do not count conditional releases that were obeyed.

**Examples:** New criminal conduct; failing to appear for court or to attend probation officer appointment; drinking, coming to a person's home/work, or contacting a person when prohibited by a court/probation order.

**Ask:** Did the person being assessed ever violate a condition of bail, deferred disposition, probation, or a protection order, regardless of whether that person was reported to police, arrested or charged?

**5. Threat to Harm or Kill at the Index Assault:** Count any threat to kill or cause physical harm to any person other than the person being assessed, made at the index incident by the person being assessed. Include spoken threat or a bodily gesture commonly recognized as a threat of physical harm to a person. The threat does not have to be carried out. Do not include threats of self harm.

- x Does not include threats of emotional harm, financial harm, legal action, or custody dispute.
- x Does not include threats to harm or kill oneself (made by the person being assessed), or threats to pets or property.
- x Does not include a covert act, or act of omission, that is not commonly recognized as a threat, even when the victim may feel harm is imminent.
- x Do not count threats occurring on separate occasions from the index incident.

**Ask:** This time, did the person being assessed threaten to harm or kill you or anyone else – excluding self-harm?



**6. Confinement of the Victim at the Index Assault:** Count any act carried out to physically prevent or attempt to prevent the victim of the index assault from leaving the scene of the assault, even if the victim eventually did leave the scene. Victim must be the current or former intimate or dating partner of the person being assessed.

- ✓ Count if there was a criminal charge of kidnapping or criminal restraint under Maine law at the index incident if victim was the abusive person's current or former intimate or dating partner.
- x Do not count threats of harm to the victim if he/she leaves, confinement before or after the incident, or confining a person other than the victim.
- x Do not count restraint in the course of an assault (e.g., holding the victim down to assault him/her).

**Examples:** Locking doors, barring an exit, impeding active attempts to escape by the victim, throwing car keys out the window.

**Ask:** This time, did the abusive person do anything to prevent you leaving the location?

**7. Victim Concern about Future Assault:** Any statement by the victim of the index assault indicating concern, fear, worry or certainty that the abusive partner being assessed will assault him/her or the victim's child in the future.

- ✓ This statement must be made by the victim in the first report of the index incident to police.
- ✓ If no statement about victim concern is in the report or statement made to police at the index incident, the victim's statement of concern, fear, or worry about a future assault made in the victim's first report to a domestic violence advocate may be counted.
- x Do not count the victim's concern for safety (victim's or child's) during the course of the index assault.

**Ask:** Are you concerned that the person being assessed will assault you or the children again?

**8. More than One Child:** Count all living children of the person being assessed, and of the victim of the index assault, and children they have together, regardless of where or with whom the children live. At least two children must exist to score this item a “1.”

- ✓ Count minor or adult children living anywhere.
- ✓ Count biological or adopted children.

**Ask:** How many children do you have? How many does the abusive partner have?

**9. Victim’s Biological Child from a Previous Partner:** Count the victim’s biological minor or adult children with a partner other than the person being assessed. Count only children of the victim of the index assault.

- ✓ Count minor or adult children living anywhere.
- ✓ Count living children only.
  
- x Does not include children adopted by the victim.

**Ask:** Do you have a child from a relationship before this partner?

**10. Prior Violent Incident against a Non-Domestic Partner:** Count any separate and prior incident in which the person being assessed assaulted someone other than a current/former intimate or dating partner.

- ✓ Pre-index incident must involve the person being assessed assaulting any person who is not a current or former intimate or dating partner or the partner’s child.
- ✓ Count incidents with or without police involvement, whether or not reported to the police.
- ✓ “Assault” for the purposes of this item is defined as physical contact or the use, or attempted use of a weapon to contact the victim’s body, or a threat of harm made with a weapon in hand.
- ✓ Information can come from sources other than criminal justice record, and the incident does not need to be known to the police.
- ✓ If Item 2 “Prior Non-Domestic Incident” is scored “1,” then this item is automatically scored “1.”
- ✓ If available documentation indicates that an item might be present, but information is unclear or ambiguous, the item may be scored with a “?”.

**Ask:** Is the person being assessed violent (fights with, hits) to people other than you and the children?

**11. Two or More Indicators of Substance Abuse:** Count this item if the offender has previously been charged with an alcohol or drug related offense, OR if at least TWO of the following apply to the person being assessed:

- ✓ Consumed alcohol immediately before or during index incident
- ✓ Used drugs immediately before or during index incident
- ✓ Recently (in days or weeks prior to the index assault) abused drugs and/or alcohol
- ✓ Noticeably increased use of drugs/alcohol in the days or weeks before index incident
- ✓ Was more angry or violent when using drugs and/or alcohol prior to index incident
- ✓ Consumed alcohol before or during a criminal offense pre-dating the index assault
- ✓ Alcohol problems or interference in their life before index incident but since age 18
- ✓ Drug problems or interference in their life before index incident but since age 18

**“Problems”:** Alcohol or drug use related to a law violation resulting in a charge or revocation of conditional release; withdrawal symptoms or inability to decrease use; financial, job, relationship, legal or health problems.

**“Drugs”:** Illicit or street drugs, or misuse of prescription medications. Do not include medications taken as prescribed.

**Example:** If the person has been charged with an alcohol-related criminal offense, e.g., OUI, before the index incident, then he/she both consumed alcohol before or during a criminal offense AND was charged for a law violation, that counts as two indicators; therefore score a “1” on this item.

**Ask:** Did your partner drink alcohol just before or during this assault?

Did your partner use drugs just before or during this assault?

Before this assault...

...did your partner abuse alcohol or drugs in the past few days or weeks?

...did your partner abuse alcohol or drugs more than usual in the past few days or weeks?

In general, is your partner more angry/violent when using alcohol or drugs?

Has your partner ever been charged for something done when drinking?

Has your partner had an alcohol/drug problem any time since age 18?

**As soon as TWO questions are answered “yes,” score “1” for this item. If only one question is answered “yes,” score “0.”**

**12. Assault on the Index Victim When She Was Pregnant:** Count when the index assault was against a victim who was pregnant OR when the person being assessed assaulted the same victim on a separate, previous occasion during the current pregnancy or during a prior pregnancy.

- ✓ “Assault” for this item includes physical contact with the victim, the use or attempted use of a weapon to contact the victim’s body, or a threat of harm made with a weapon in hand.
- ✓ Include only assaults on the victim of the index assault if she was pregnant at that time, or any previous assault on this victim by the man being assessed if she was pregnant at the time.
- ✓ Information about the assault can come from sources other than criminal history record, and the incident does not need to be known to police.
- ✓ It is not required that the person being assessed state that he knew she was pregnant at the time of the assault.
- ✓ If you don’t have a detailed description of the incident, count a criminal charge of assault or another violent offense if it is known that the victim was the index victim and she was pregnant then.

**Ask (female victims):** Has your partner ever assaulted you when you were pregnant?

**13. Barriers to Victim Support:** Count when one or more of the specific following barriers were present at the time of the index incident:

- ✓ Children aged 18 or under who live with the victim and for whom he/she provides care
- ✓ No cell or landline telephone
- ✓ No access to vehicle, no public transportation in the vicinity of the home and no money for taxi
- ✓ Living in a geographically isolated area
- ✓ Alcohol/drug use by the victim just before/during the index incident, or history of alcohol/drug abuse (alcohol intoxication or frequent use, use of street drugs, or misuse of prescription medication)

**Ask:**

Do you have any children at home for whom you provide care?

Do you live in a home with no phone?

Do you live where there is no access to transportation?

Where you live, if you yelled for help could someone hear you?

**As soon as one question is answered “yes,” score “1” for this item.  
Circumstances or barriers NOT on this list do not count.**

# SCORING THE ODARA

## Raw Scores

- ✓ Score each of the 13 items as “1” if evidence indicates item present.
- ✓ Score “0” if there is no evidence the item is present.
- ✓ Score “?” if item is unclear or ambiguous.
- ✓ The ODARA Raw Score = the sum of the item scores.

### **Scoring is not complete and you should seek more information if:**

- You have no criminal history information
- You have no details of the index incident
- You have no information about children

### **Example of Scoresheet; Do not use without full scoring instructions.**

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| _1_ | 1. Prior domestic incident of assault in a police or criminal record   |
| _0_ | 2. Prior non-domestic incident of assault in police or criminal record |
| _0_ | 3. Prior custodial sentence of 30 days or more                         |
| _0_ | 4. Failure on prior conditional release                                |
| _1_ | 5. Threat to harm or kill at the index assault                         |
| _1_ | 6. Confinement of the victim at the index assault                      |
| _1_ | 7. Victim concern about future assaults                                |
| _1_ | 8. More than one child   |
| _1_ | 9. Victim’s biological child from a previous partner                   |
| _0_ | 10. Prior violent incident against a non-domestic partner              |
| _0_ | 11. Two or more indicators of substance abuse                          |
|     |  |
| _1_ | 12. Assault on the index victim when she was pregnant                  |
| _0_ | 13. Barriers to victim support   |
| _7_ | Raw Score (sum of items scored “1”)                                    |
| ___ | Final/Adjusted Score   |

**Unclear or Ambiguous Information:** If the available documentation indicates that an item might be present, but the information is unclear or ambiguous, the item may be treated as unclear or ambiguous and scored with a “?”.

**Example:** If a criminal history record check shows a prior charge of assault but no information is available to confirm whether it is a domestic violence assault, the two items “prior domestic assault” and “prior non-domestic assault,” can be treated as unclear or ambiguous and scored with a “?”.

## Final/Adjusted Scores for Assessments with Unclear or Ambiguous Information

Number of Unclear or Ambiguous Items

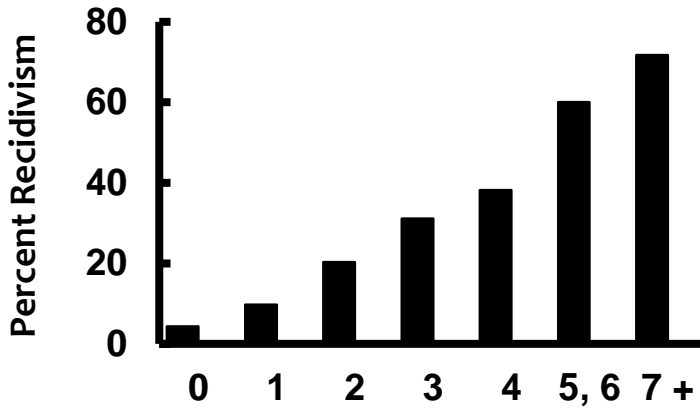
↓ Raw Score	1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	2
2	2	2	3	3	3
3	3	4	4	4	5
4	4	5	5	6	7+
5	5	6	7+	7+	7+
6	7+	7+	7+	7+	7+

**To Use Table:** In the Raw Score column, find the score that you obtained by adding the items scored “1.” Next, read along that row until you get to the column that indicates the number of ambiguous items you have scored with a “?”. The number in the square where the row and column meet is the Final/Adjusted Score.

Adjusting scores via prorating is a standard assessment procedure for dealing with unclear or ambiguous information. Prorating replaces unclear or ambiguous information with data estimated from all items that are not unclear or ambiguous. Prorating is preferable to scoring “0” for unclear or ambiguous items, which could underestimate risk, or scoring “1” for unclear or ambiguous items, which could overestimate risk.

**Example:** Based on the available documentation, the person being assessed has a Raw Score of 2 on the ODARA, but you are not sure about prior violence against a non-domestic partner or prior incidents known to the police. This situation might occur if there is a charge of assault on the criminal record without supplementary information as to whether the incident met the criteria for a domestic or non-domestic incident (and thus prior violence against a non-domestic partner). With a Raw Score of 2 and with 3 unclear or ambiguous items, you would start from “2” in the Raw Score column and follow along the row until it meets the Number of Unclear or Ambiguous Items column “3.” You will get a Final/Adjusted Score of 3.

## INTERPRETING ODARA SCORES



Construction N = 589

ODARA Scores

Percent in Category N = 1421

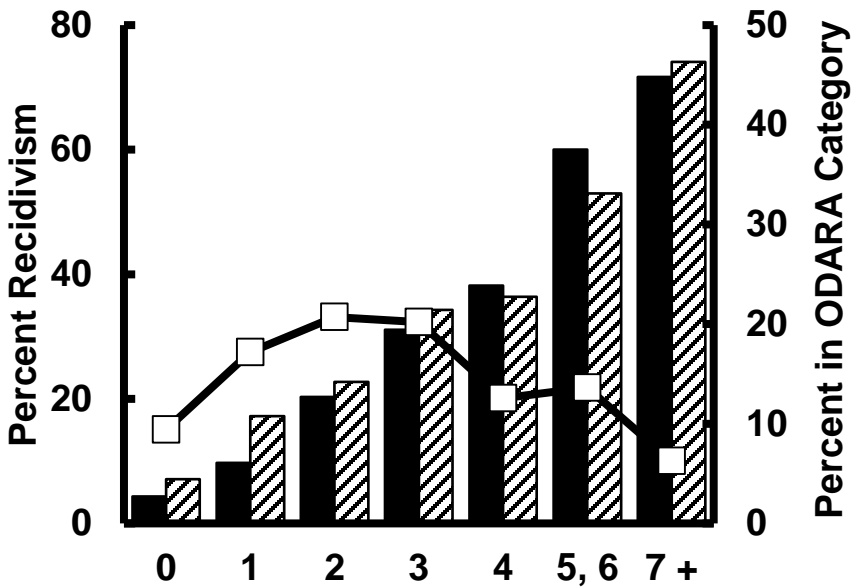
All Cross-validations N=836

Based on the original research, this graph indicates the percentage of men recidivating (on the left y axis) for each ODARA score (along the x axis). The black bars represent the 589 cases in the ODARA sample that was used to develop the tool. For every increase in the ODARA score, there is an increase in percentage of person being assessed who assaulted their partner again. This linear increase indicates that the ODARA score predicts recidivism well.

The probability of recidivism can be different depending on the follow-up time and definition of recidivism. But the relative rate of recidivism is not substantially affected by different definitions of recidivism or timeframes.

The ODARA was developed on cases of partner assault known to police, and new assaults only counted as recidivism if they came to the attention of police. The likelihood of re-assault, then, is at least the likelihood given by the ODARA score.

Recent research has validated the ODARA for use with female offenders. The ODARA score is a valid predictor of women's domestic violence recidivism. Women who score higher on the ODARA are more likely to reoffend than women with lower ODARA scores. However, we cannot compare scores of female offenders with scores of male offenders, because overall women recidivate at a much lower rate than men; women recidivate at a much lower rate than expected norms based on male offenders.



**▨ All Cross-validations N=836**

**—■— Percent in Category N=1421**

**■ Construction N=589**

Building on the original research, the new bars represent over 800 cases in the first three validation studies. This graph shows the linear relationship between ODARA and the number of men who recidivated. For every increase in ODARA score, there is an increase in the % of men who assaulted a female partner.

The line represents the percentage of men (on the right y axis) obtaining a particular ODARA score (along the x axis). The line allows us to compare men according to their risk of recidivism. It is the basis of data regarding rank order, percent in this range of scores, percent scoring lower, and percent scoring higher. Rank order data do not change according to the follow-up time or definition of recidivism.

The scores 5-6 and 7-13 are collapsed into one category each, because of the small number of cases obtaining these scores. Having few observed cases in a group increases the chances of an unusual result, so any rate of recidivism observed for a small group – such as perpetrators scoring 13 on the ODARA – would be unreliable. Collapsing the highest scores into one category increases confidence in the reported rate of recidivism.



## REPORTING ODARA SCORES

The ODARA should be scored and signed by a **single person**. The person should document the **eligible crime, eligible relationship, and the scoring of ODARA in the narrative** section of the report accompanying the ODARA scoresheet. The details in the narrative must be consistent with, and directly support, the ODARA score. **The person’s sentences in the narrative should provide the basis for scoring each ODARA item. From reading the narrative, someone else should be able to score the ODARA the same way that person did.** Regarding Item 13, it is helpful for the person to note the specific barriers to victim support that were present at the incident, as well as additional barriers present but not used to score the ODARA. This assists others who read the report in understanding the specific barriers faced by the victim. The person should also include Raw and Final/Adjusted scores.

### Statistical Interpretation Table

ODARA Final Score	Percent Recidivism	Percent In This Range	Percent Scoring Lower	Percent Scoring Higher
0	7	9	0	91
1	17	17	9	74
2	22	21	26	53
3	34	20	47	33
4	39	13	67	20
5-6	53	14	80	6
7-13	74	6	94	0

**Table B.1 Risk Assessment for Domestically Violent Men:** Hilton, Harris & Rice, [Risk Assessment for Domestically Violent Men](#), American Psychological Ass’n, at 170.

**Example:** The ODARA score for (person assessed) was based on information ascertained at the index incident on (date) and a criminal history record check. (Person assessed) had a Final/Adjusted Score of (score) on the ODARA. As indicated in the ODARA Statistical Interpretation Table, (percent scoring higher; \_\_%) of the men in the original ODARA research obtained higher scores than (person assessed). When followed up for approximately five years, (percent recidivism; \_\_%) committed a new domestic violence incident recorded by police.

## “HOW LIKELY IS MY PARTNER TO ASSAULT AGAIN?”



**ODARA score = 0:** 7% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



**ODARA score = 1:** 17% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



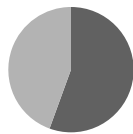
**ODARA score = 2:** 22% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



**ODARA score = 3:** 34% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



**ODARA score = 4:** 39% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



**ODARA score = 5-6:** 53% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.



**ODARA score = 7-13:** 74% of such abusive partners commit another assault against their partner (or, in some cases, a future partner) that comes to the attention of the police, within an average of about 5 years.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. Why use ODARA?** Studies show that the ODARA is more valid than other domestic violence risk assessments currently in use. The ODARA score indicates: 1) how the abusive partner's risk compares with that of known persons who assault their partners; and 2) how likely the abusive person is to assault again. A higher ODARA score is also associated with more and sooner assaults, more serious injury, and more serious charges.

**2. Who can use the ODARA?** The ODARA is not restricted to a particular group of users, although it was developed for use by law enforcement officers. Evaluation has shown that training significantly improves accuracy in scoring the ODARA.

**3. The ODARA was developed by Canadian researchers. Is it valid for use in the United States?** A wealth of research over several decades indicates that the predictors of criminal behavior, and violence specifically, are similar across jurisdictions, countries, and ethnicities. The ODARA also was tested and validated using geographically and ethnically diverse populations.

**4. Can I add other information about risk to adjust the ODARA score?** No. More information is not required, and adjusting the score by adding other information or combining the ODARA with other risk assessments could lower accuracy.

**5. Can the ODARA be used to assess lethality?** The ODARA does not predict lethal domestic violence specifically, but higher ODARA scores indicate more severe future assaults, and research associates the highest ODARA scores with domestic violence homicides.

**6. Why are jealousy or threats of suicide not included in the ODARA?** The 13 items on the ODARA are those found to be the strongest predictors of domestic violence recidivism. Other information was not predictive or would not improve the accuracy of the risk assessment. Therefore, other information should not be used to adjust the ODARA score or its interpretation of risk. Factors such as jealousy, suicidal behavior, presence of weapons, victim injury, etc., should still inform offender interventions or be used to assist victims with safety planning.

**7. I am scoring the ODARA entirely from a victim interview. She/he doesn't know about her/his partner's prior involvement with police. Can I still score the ODARA?** No. The ODARA can be scored with up to 5 unclear or ambiguous items, but if no information is known about prior police involvement or no-contact orders, the officer should seek additional information.

**8. What about assaults by women or assaults in same-sex relationships?** The ODARA was developed and tested initially for male-to-female domestic assaults among current or former cohabiting or marital relationships. It is now also validated for dating violence, and for assaults by women on men. Research regarding the use of ODARA in same-sex relationships has not yet proceeded.

**9. What about assaults by minors?** The ODARA developers do not have data on minors; ODARA has not yet been tested with this population.

# ODARA ITEM SUMMARY SCORING SHEET

Do not use without full scoring instructions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Prior domestic incident of assault in a police or criminal record
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Prior non-domestic incident of assault in a police or criminal record
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Prior custodial sentence of 30 days or more
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Failure on prior conditional release
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Threat to harm or kill at the index assault
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Confinement of the victim at the index assault
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Victim concern about future assaults
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. More than one child
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Victim's biological child from a previous partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Prior violent incident against a non-domestic partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Two or more indicators of substance abuse
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Assault on the index victim when she was pregnant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Barriers to victim support

\_\_\_\_\_ Raw Score (sum of items scored "1")

\_\_\_\_\_ Final/Adjusted Score

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Completing ODARA

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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