

**CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION**  
**Criminal Court Assessment Tool – Veterans-Short Screen (VET-S)**

The VET-S is a screening tool designed to help arraignment courts and pretrial services agencies identify candidates for veteran’s courts using indicators of risk and need. The screener consists of forty-six items total, including nineteen administrative items that are used for defendant tracking purposes (A1-A9, Demographics Information, and M1-M8). Nine of the core items that assess for criminal risk (R1-R8) are based on official criminal justice records. These items contribute to an overall risk score, but do not concern the underlying needs of the defendant. Thirteen items (R9-R18) contribute both to the overall risk score *and* to an understanding of important needs. The final five items (N1-N5) are exclusively used to understand clinical needs that may warrant further assessment or referral. **They do not contribute to the risk score.**

**Administrative Information**

*[Record the following information for the purpose of tracking individual defendants. This section is not a part of the formal risk and need screening tool.]*

- A1. Interviewer Initials \_\_\_\_\_
- A2. Name of Client \_\_\_\_\_
- A3. Person-based Identifier (Name or System ID) \_\_\_\_\_
- A4. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
- A5. Docket or case-based Identifier \_\_\_\_\_
- A6. Arrest date on current criminal case \_\_\_\_\_  
MO      DAY      YR
- A7. Top arrest charge (numeric penal code) \_\_\_\_\_
- A8. Charge Severity (Felony / Misdemeanor / Violation / Other) \_\_\_\_\_
- A9. Court or Program Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Demographics Information**

	Circle One	Points
What is your gender	a) Male b) Female c) Transgender woman d) Transgender male e) Refuse to answer	<b><i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i></b>

What race do you identify with? (Choose all that apply)	a) Black/African American b) White/Caucasian c) Hispanic/Latino/Spanish d) Asian/Pacific Islander e) Native American f) Multiracial g) Other (Specify): h) Refuse to answer	<b>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</b>
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**Military Service**

Introduction: First I have a few questions about your military experience, if you have any.

		Circle One
M1.	Have you ever served in the Armed Forces? <i>[If no, skip to R1.]</i>	a) No b) Yes c) Refuse to answer
M2.	In what branch(es) of the Armed Forces did you serve? (Choose all that apply)	a) Army (including Army National Guard or Reserve) b) Navy (including Reserve) c) Marine Corps (including Reserve) d) Air force (including Air National Guard or Reserve) e) Coast Guard (Including Reserve) f) PHS/NOAA g) Never in Armed Forces/National Guard/Reserves h) Refuse to answer
M3.	When did you first enter the Armed Forces/National Guard/Reserves?	MO: YR: Refusal
M4.	What is your current military status? <i>Circle all that apply.</i>	a) Active duty/guard/reserve b) Retired c) Honorable discharge d) General discharge e) Bad Conduct f) Dishonorable discharge g) Other than honorable discharge h) Refuse to answer
M5.	Were you ever deployed in a combat zone or similar hazardous duty?	No (0) Yes (a) Refusal
M6.	Have you ever received services through the Veterans Health Administration?	No (0) Yes (a) Refusal

M7.	Have you ever been through a military disciplinary process (Article 15, Non Judicial punishment (NJP), Captain's or Admiral's mast, and/or court martial)? <i>If No, skip M8.</i>	No (0) Yes (0) Refusal (r)
M8.	Please briefly describe why you were referred for disciplinary action.	

**Section I. Criminal Record Review**

[Section I is where the scored risk assessment begins. Answers for Section I can be found in the official case record. For each question, circle the appropriate answer and then write the corresponding number—the number in parentheses next to the answer—in the far right column. This can be done before or after the defendant interview portion of the assessment. If the information is missing in the official case record, circle “u” for unavailable]

		Circle One	Points
R1.	Top arrest charge (choose one).	Involves a property offense (e.g. petit larceny or theft, criminal possession of stolen property) (5) Involves a drug offense that is NOT a marijuana offense (3) Other (0) Unavailable (u)	
R2.	Number of criminal convictions, <u>past three years.</u>	Zero (0) One (1) Two (2) Three+ (3) Unavailable (u)	
R3.	Total number of criminal convictions.	Zero (0) One (0) Two (0) Three+ (0) Unavailable (u)	<b><i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i></b>
R3a.	Total number of convictions for DUI/DWI.	Zero (0) One (0) Two (a) Three+ (a) Unavailable (u)	<b><i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i></b>

R4.	Number of warrants for failure to appear in court.	Zero (0) One (1) Two (2) Three+ (3) Unavailable (u)	
R5.	Number of currently open cases (excluding current case).	Zero (0) One (1) Two (2) Three+ (3) Unavailable (u)	
R6.	Any orders of protection present in the criminal record?	No (0) Yes, current/open (a) Yes, expired (a) Unavailable (u)	<i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i>
R7.	Any domestic violence charges (includes past convictions and present charges)?	No (0) Yes (a) Unavailable (u)	<i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i>
R8.	Total number of prior convictions for violent offenses (as defined by your state's statutes).	Zero (0) One (a) Two (a) Three+ (a) Unavailable (u)	<i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i>
Section I Subtotal			

## Section II. Defendant Interview

[Section II is also part of the scored risk assessment. For each question, circle the appropriate answer and then write the corresponding number or letter—the number or letter in parentheses next to the answer—in the far right column. If the interviewee declines to answer a particular item, circle “r” for refusal.]

Introduction: I’m going to ask you a number of questions—questions we ask everyone coming to this court [program]. The first set of questions will focus on your education and employment history, your living situation, and your personal relationships.

		Circle One	Points
R9.	Have you either graduated high school or received a GED?	No (2) Yes (0) Refusal (r)	
R10.	Were you either employed (not including illegal activities), attending school, or attending a vocational training program at the time of your arrest? <i>[If yes, SKIP to R10b]</i>	No (1) Yes (0) Refusal (r)	

R10a.	Other than the Armed Forces, have you ever been legally employed? <i>[If no, SKIP to R11]</i>	No (1) Yes (0) Refusal (r)	
R10b.	Have you ever been fired from a job?	No (0) Yes (1) Refusal (r)	
R11.	How would you describe your living situation at the time of your arrest? <i>(Choose one)</i> Living on the streets, in a car, in a drop-in shelter Living in a long-term shelter (transitional housing) Living in a halfway house Living with friends or family Living in an apartment, house, or room (own/rent) Living in public housing Other Refusal  <i>[If 4, SKIP to R12a]</i>	(4) (2) (0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (r)	
R12.	How long had you been at your current address at the time of your arrest? <i>(Choose one)</i> Less than 1 year 1-3 years 4 or more years Refusal Not Applicable (Currently Homeless)	(2) (1) (0) (r) (0)	
R12a.	Where will you be living upon your release from custody? <i>(Choose one)</i> Living on the streets, in a car, in a drop-in shelter Living in a long-term shelter (transitional housing) Living in a halfway house Living with friends or family Living in an apartment, house, or room (own/rent) Living in public housing Other Refusal	(0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (r)	
R13.	Do you currently have a primary or "main" intimate partner? By intimate partner we mean a girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, or husband	No (2) Yes (0) Refusal (r)	
R14.	Have you been through a separation or divorce in the last year?	No (0) Yes (2) Refusal (r)	
R15.	Do you have any children under the age of 18?	Yes (a) No (0) Refusal (r)	<b><i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i></b>

R16.	Have you ever used alcohol or illegal drugs?	Yes (0) No (0) Refusal (r)	<i>Please circle the correct answer, but do not score</i>
R17.	How old were you when you first used alcohol or illegal drugs? Less than 10 years 10 to 14 years old 15 to 19 years old 20 to 24 years old 25 or older Refusal I have never used alcohol or illegal drugs	(4) (3) (2) (1) (0) (r) (0)	
R18.	About how often do you <u>currently</u> use alcohol or illegal drugs? About every day (five or more times a week) One or a few times per week One or a few times per month Only a few times each year Not currently using Refusal I have never used alcohol or illegal drugs	(1) (a) (a) (a) (0) (r) (0)	
Section II Subtotal			

### Section III. Defendant Interview (Needs)

[Section III is not a part of the formal risk assessment. In other words, the following questions DO NOT contribute to the risk score, but the answers should be used to inform the selection of appropriate supervision, treatment, or diversion tracks. As in the previous sections, please circle the appropriate answer and then write the corresponding number—the number in parentheses next to the answer—in the far right column. If the interviewee declines to answer a particular item, circle “r” for refusal.]

		Circle One	Points
N1.	Have you ever been in a hospital for emotional or mental health problems?	No (0) Yes (a) Don't know (0) Refusal (r)	
N2.	Do you currently feel that other people know your thoughts and can read your mind?	No (0) Yes (a) Don't know (0) Refusal (r)	
N3.	During the past month, have you been constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?	No (0) Yes (a) Don't know (0) Refusal (r)	

N4.	Are you currently sick or experiencing withdrawal symptoms associated with substance abuse?	No (0) Yes (a) Don't know (0) Refusal (r)	
N5.	During the past year, have you ever thought of harming yourself?	No (0) Yes (a) Don't know (0) Refusal (r)	

**Calculating the Risk Score.** Add the **Section I subtotal and the Section II subtotal**. This is the raw risk score. Next, count the number of "r" and "u" responses indicated in the far right for questions for **Sections I and II**. If there are more than 3 "u" responses OR more than 4 "r" responses, a valid risk score cannot be calculated. DO NOT count any of the answers to Section III (N1-N5) in the risk score.

Risk Score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Risk Classification.** Circle the appropriate risk classification based on the raw risk score.

- Minimal Risk (0 - 7)
- Low Risk (8 - 15)
- Moderate Risk (16 - 23)
- High Risk (over 24)

**Need Flags.** Compute need flags as indicated below. Need flags indicate a possible need for further assessment, treatment, or social services. Positive need flags do not conclusively demonstrate the presence of the given problem or diagnosis.

Potentially Eligible for VHA Benefits	Yes	(Circle if M1 = "b" and M4 = "c" or "d" OR M6 = "a")
Combat	Yes	(Circle if M5 score = "a")
Multiple DUI/DWI Convictions	Yes	(Circle if R3a = "a")
IPV - Batterer	Yes	(Circle if R6 OR R7 score = "a")
History of Violent Offenses	Yes	(Circle if R8 score = "a")
Education	Yes	(Circle if R9 score = 2)
Employment	Yes	(Circle if R10 score = 1)
Housing	Yes	(Circle if R11 score = 4)
Substance Use	Yes	(Circle if R18 = 1 or "a")
Prior Mental Health Hospitalization	Yes	(Circle if N1 = "a")
Psychosis	Yes	(Circle if N2 = "a")
PTSD	Yes	(Circle if N3 = "a")
Current Withdrawal Symptoms	Yes	(Circle if N4 = "a")
Suicidal Ideation	Yes	(Circle if N5 = "a")

**Case Processing.** Will the defendant be referred to the Veterans Treatment Court?

- Yes
- No, Client was eligible, but did not chose to apply
- No, Client was ineligible for referral to the VTC (please explain the reason below)

Reason for ineligibility: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_