



# The Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST): Detecting Health Risks in Children and Adults

*Assuring Health and Welfare:  
Predictive, Proactive, Preventative*



## What is the HRST?

The necessity to be aware of health risks and act on these risks preventatively cannot be overemphasized. Early detection saves lives. The Health Risk Screening Tool is simple screening tool that provides objective data about health fragility in persons of varying ages with a range of exceptional needs. These include, but are not limited to, intellectual and developmental disabilities, aging, mental health, physical disabilities and traumatic brain injury. *The goal of the HRST is to promote optimum health, to mitigate or eliminate identified risks and to avert unnecessary health complications or deaths.* The HRST provides measureable data in five categories on a total of 22 rating items. These 5 categories include such rating items as: *Eating, Ambulation, Toileting, Self-abuse, Nutrition, Gastrointestinal, Seizures, Falls and Hospital Admissions*. The outcome of scoring all 22 rating items is an objective Health Care Level that represents the overall degree of health risk and destabilization of the person. Since each of the 22 rating items receives its own score, the level of health risk can be determined on each of the items as well.

Once an individual is fully screened, the HRST produces Service and Training Considerations that can be used by staff and families. Service Considerations describe what further evaluations, specialists, assessments or clinical interventions may be needed to support the individual based on the identified issues.

## The HRST's 5 categories

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|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Functional Activities</b> | This category looks for risks in common activities of daily living   |
| <b>Behavioral</b>            | Behaviors can be indicators and causes of risk to the person and others as well as attempts to communicate |
| <b>Physiological</b>         | These items cover major body systems most often affected by various factors or disabilities                |
| <b>Safety</b>                | The number and severity of falls and injuries are indicators and causes of risks                           |
| <b>Frequency of Services</b> | How frequently a person must access health care systems is an indication of risk                           |

The Training Considerations demonstrate what specific training support staff or families may need to address areas of identified risk. Both the Service and Training Considerations allow the HRST to be tailored specifically to the needs of the person. They also empower the team or support network with knowledge on how to go into action in areas where risk has been noted.

The HRST also assigns a **Health Care Level** to the individual based off the objective information gathered in the screening process. Health Care Levels can range from 1 to 6.


A screenshot of the HRST web application. The top navigation bar includes 'About Me', 'My Contacts', 'Diagnoses', 'Medications', 'Ratings', 'Support Team', and 'Case Management'. The 'My Ratings' section is active, showing a 'Rating Areas' tab. Below this, there's a 'Scoring Summary' table with columns for 'Last Updated', 'Last RN Review', 'Total Score', 'Total # Ratings', 'Q Scored?', and 'Healthcare Level'. The table shows a score of 31 for 'A. Eating' with a healthcare level of 3. A detailed view of 'A. Eating' is shown below, with a 'Score' of 4 and an 'Explanation' that reads: 'Eats independently without texture/consistency alterations or other adaptations for safety'. The 'Explanation' also notes that the patient requires intermittent physical assistance and/or verbal prompts to eat, and requires constant verbal and/or physical assistance to complete a meal. The 'Healthcare Level' is 3, indicating a 'High Risk' status.

### HRST Screening Frequency for Adults and Children

- For adults or children, it is important that the HRST be updated any time there is a change in health status.
- For adults, the HRST should be updated or reviewed at *least* annually.
- For children, the update frequency is increased.
  - Under 2 years of age, the HRST should be reviewed *quarterly*
  - From ages 2–5 y/o, the HRST should be reviewed *semi-annually*
  - From ages 6 y/o and above, the normal *annual* schedule may be observed.



### Health Care Levels

- Level 1** (Low Risk): 0-12 Points
- Level 2** (Low Risk): 13-25 Points
- Level 3** (Moderate Risk): 26-38 Points
- Level 4** (High Moderate Risk): 39-53 Points
- Level 5** (High Risk): 54-68 Points
- Level 6** (Highest Risk): 69 or greater

### The HRST: A Brief History

The HRST has its origins in ensuring continuity of care for adults and children with unique health and behavioral needs. In 1992, as a result of federal lawsuit, the state of Oklahoma was transitioning about 1100 individuals into the community from a large congregate setting. The judge presiding over the transition saw the necessity for an instrument that could empower staff and families, most of whom had no clinical background, to recognize health risks **early** so that preventative interventions and other supports could be utilized. He solicited the help of Karen Green McGowan, an RN who now has over 50 years of experience in the I/DD field, to develop a tool that could be used by non-clinical staff to red-flag health risks and destabilization. The tool was field tested on over 6000 individuals and later renamed the HRST. It is currently used in numerous states in a variety of ways to empower and educate staff and families to identify the early warning signs of health risks and what to do about them.

## Benefits and Outcomes of the HRST for Adults and Children

- ✓ Empowers families and caregivers to be responsive to health related risks
- ✓ Allows for early detection and early action
- ✓ Points out the need for other services and training that may be less than obvious
- ✓ Educates case managers, families, and direct support professionals with knowledge of where risks are present and how to intervene
- ✓ Empowers families and staff with talking points while visiting community doctors
- ✓ Helps caregivers and doctors discover the root cause of risks
- ✓ Gives actions steps on how to mitigate or eliminate risks before they become chronic or life-threatening
- ✓ Identifies and addresses obstacles to a well-lived life
- ✓ Assists with Person-Centered planning and continuity of care
- ✓ Objectively quantifies the level of risk as signified in the assigned Health Care Level
- ✓ Helps avert Preventable deaths!

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*"The HRST has helped immensely in monitoring for unhealthy patterns that might have resulted in detrimental medical outcomes. People are alive today because of the HRST. We observe and assess our individuals very closely as to make certain that they are in the best health possible. The HRST provides us with a snapshot of each individual's ongoing health status as part of a continual assessment enabling us to observe any adverse health patterns. This allows our team of caregivers to provide better continuity of care with the individual's health care professionals."*

*M.W., RN*

### Training

Only trained users complete HRST screenings. We call these users *Raters*. Raters must complete a 6-10 hour online training course prior to screening using the HRST. Raters also receive ongoing supplemental training and support.

Quality and accuracy of scoring is very important. To this end, identified Registered Nurses are required to complete the online training but also receive additional training on how to complete quality reviews on the HRST. Any Health Care Level reaching 3 or higher is required to have a quality review by a trained RN or equivalent. In addition, it is recommended that 10-20% of Health Care Levels 1 and 2 also receive this quality review.

### The Screening Process

Raters gather information from a variety of sources in order to conduct screenings. These include but are not limited to: family input, medical records, input from other support staff who know the person well, medical history, current plans of care, etc. Though a formal meeting to complete the screening is optional, the individual, the family, and the people who know the person best are always encouraged to contribute.

The Rater will then use this gathered information to answer a series of Yes and No questions about each of the 22 rating items to arrive at an item score. The accumulation of these scores results in the assignment of a Health Care Level.

Information placed in the HRST can be updated as needed for any reason.

Want to learn more about the HRST? Visit our website: <http://hrstonline.com>