Celebrating 20 Years of the Forensic Assessment Division: Our History, Evolution, and the 2025 Comprehensive Risk Assessments (CRA)

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The Evolution of the Forensi Assessment Division

- **Understanding where we began and how the Division has evolved**
- The FAD was established in 2006 to provide the Board of Parole Hearings with independent, evidence informed violence risk assessments.
- Its development was shaped by evolving legal mandates including the *Rutherford* litigation, as well as advances forensic risk assessment and professional practice.
- Over time, the Division has expanded its responsibilities to include screenings for individuals who qualify for Sexual Violent Predator (SVP) commitments and adapte to major changes in California s parole population.
- Today, the FAD is a nationally recognized program whos work supports fair, consistent, and well informed parole decision making.

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Observed Recidivism Base Rate Comparisons at Three Years Post-Release

	Individuals Released Without Discretion in California (2020 21)	Individuals Discretionarily Released in California through the BPH suitability process (2020 21)
Violent Convictions	**7.9%** (92.1% were conviction free) (Felony Crimes Against Persons)	**0.7%** (99.3% were conviction free) (0.7 % Felony Crimes Against Persons)
All Misdemeanor and Felony Convictions	**39.5%** (60.5% were conviction free) (24% felony and 15.5%	**3.8 %** (96.2% were conviction-free) (1.7% felony and 2%

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Recidivism Rates for Indeterminately Sentenced Persons (N =6,733) Granted Parole and Released by the Board (Released between 12/1/2015 and 6/30/23)

	Three Year Felony Re Convictions
Low	87 of 3,819 **(2.3%)**
Moderate	93 of 2,883 **(3.2%)**
High	N/A

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Felony Arrest Rates for Indeterminately Sentenced Individuals (N =6,733) Granted Parole and Released by the Board (Released between 12/1/2015 and 6/30/23)

	Three Year Felony Arrests
Low	371 of 3,819 **(9.7%)**
Moderate	403 of 2,883 **(14.0%)**
High	N/A

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Risk Categories

Risk Category	Definition
Low Risk	Non-elevated risk relative to long-term incarcerated persons and other persons under supervision.
Moderate Risk	Elevated risk relative to long-term incarcerated persons and non-elevated risk relative to other persons under supervision.
High Risk	Markedly elevated risk relative to long-term incarcerated persons and average risk relative to other persons under supervision.

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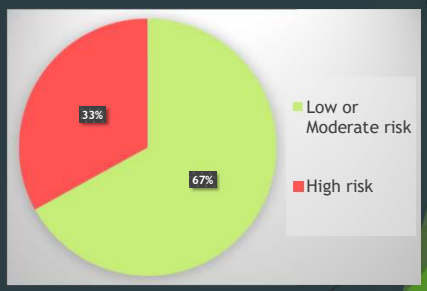
Normative Approach to Risk Communication

A normative or comparative approach communicates an individual s level of violence risk relative to that of a specified population. It indicates whether the person s risk is comparatively lower, similar, or higher, than the risk posed by others in that group.

- Two comparison groups:
  - Prong 1
  - How does this person compare to supervised persons discretionarily released by the board (BPH grantees)?
  - Prong 2
  - How does this person compare to the vast majority of supervised persons released without discretion?

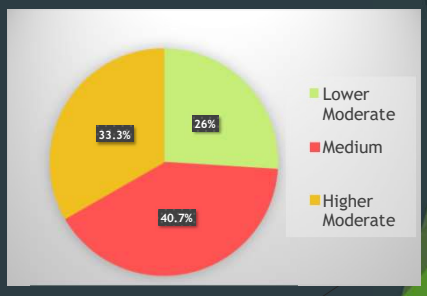
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Most long term incarcerated persons (67%) in 2 assessed by FAD psychologists to represent non risk relative to supervised individuals released without discretion



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Within the Moderate Risk Category



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Risk Categories and Average Classification Scores and Ages

	Average Classification Score	Average Age
Low	17	56
Moderate	31	55
High	98	50

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HCR-20-V3's Twenty Risk Factors Assessed to be *Present To Some Degree*

	Average Number of Risk Factors Assessed to be Present to Some Degree
Low	11 of 20 Risk Factors
Moderate	14 of 20 Risk Factors
High	17 of 20 Risk Factors

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Relevance

- Relevance refers to the extent to which a factor critical to the evaluator s formulation of what caused the person to perpetrate violence and ho best to prevent future violence. Are there sufficie risk management strategies in place to mitigate t salience of that risk factor?
- The current relevance of history of substance abu for example, may vary according to the types of substances used, severity of use, degree of impairment caused, **relationship to violence**, length of sobriety, responsiveness to treatment, degree of self awareness and appreciation of relapse prevention, and potential for future harm

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More on Relevance

- Historical factors, such as history of violence, become more dynamic and changeable in nature when we factor in current relevance.
- For example, let s take an individual who committed a violent crime 25 yeai ago. Their history of violence may have less relevance today because they have not engaged in violence in many years and this risk factor has been sufficientl addressed/ managed through treatment programming, maturation, personal growth, etc.

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Risk Categories and Historic Risk *Relevance*

	Current High Relevance of History of Problems With Other Antisocial Behavior	*Current High Relevance of* History of Problems With Substance Use	*Current High Relevance of* History of Problems With Personality Disorder	*Current High Relevance of* History of Problems With Treatment Or Supervision Response	*Current High Relevance of* History of Problems With Traumatic Experiences
Low	1%	4%	1%	1%	1%
Mod	23%	26%	29%	30%	6%
High	76%	64%	79%	91%	23%

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History of Problems with Major Mental Disorder

	Present to Some Degree (H6)
Low	41%
Moderate	45%
High	61%

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History of Problems with Major Mental Disorder

- Of long term incarcerated persons with history of problems with majo mental disorder:
  - 13% were rated Low risk.
  - 50% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 37% were rated High risk.

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Recent Problems with Symptoms of Major Mental Disorder

- Of long term incarcerated persons with recent problems with symptoms of mental disorder:
  - 17% were rated Low risk.
  - 25% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 50% were rated High risk.

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- Participation in mental health services is not a barrier for favorable risk assessment and parole release and for some people it is an essential component of risk management and successful community transition.

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Clinical and Risk Management Problems

Clinical *or Recent* Problems and Risk Management *or Future* Problems Differentiate Low, Moderate, and Hig Risk Groups Better than *Historic* Problems.

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Recent Problems with Instability

	Present to Some Degree	Assessed to be Highly Relevant to Current Risk
Low	5%	0%
Moderate	33%	12%
High	80%	71%

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Recent Problems with Instability

- Of long term incarcerated persons with recent problems with instability:
  - 3% were rated Low risk.
  - 45% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 52% were rated High risk.

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Recent Problems with Treatment or Supervision Response

	Present to Some Degree	Assessed to be Highly Relevant to Current Risk
Low	22%	0%
Moderate	64%	24%
High	97%	88%

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Recent Problems with Treatment or Supervision Response

- Of long term incarcerated persons with recent problems with treatment or supervision response:
  - 6% were rated Low risk.
  - 53% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 41% were rated High risk.

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Recent Problems with Self-Awareness

	Present to Some Degree	Assessed to be Highly Relevant to Current Risk
Low	40%	3%
Moderate	84%	31%
High	85%	71%

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Recent Problems with Self-Awareness

- Of long term incarcerated persons with recent problems with self awareness:
  - 11% were rated Low risk.
  - 64% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 32% were rated High risk.

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Future Problems with Stress or Coping (Anticipated In the Community)

	Present to Some Degree (R5)	Assessed to be Highly Relevant to Current Risk
Low	92%	8%
Moderate	99%	44%
High	99%	92%

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Future Problems with Stress or Coping (Anticipated in the Community)

- Of long term incarcerated persor expected to have future problem with stress and coping:
  - 17% were rated Low risk.
  - 54% were rated Moderate risk.
  - 29% were rated High risk.

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Static-99R

Static 99 Risk Category	Percent	Sexual Recidivism Estimate
Very Low Risk	7%	N/A
Below Average Risk	18%	< 1%
Average Risk	42%	1.3% to 2.8%
Above Average Risk	23%	4.8%
Well Above Average Risk	10%	20.2%

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Static-99R

- Of those who obtained Well-Above Average Static 99R Ratings
  - 4% were Low Risk
  - 43% were Moderate Risk
  - 53% were High Risk

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Comparing Indeterminately Sentenced (ISL) and Determinately Sentenced (DSL) Individuals

	ISL Average age = 55	DSL Average age 43
Low	8%	4%
Moderate	62%	44%
High	30%	52%

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Elderly Parolees and Non-Elderly Parolees

	EP	NON EP
Low	8%	7%
Moderate	66%	54%
High	26%	39%

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Elderly Parole

	ISL	DSL
Low	8%	6%
Moderate	66%	62%
High	26%	32%

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Elderly Parolees

	Sexual Offending History	No Sexual Offending History
Low	4%	10%
Moderate	66%	65%
High	30%	24%

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Indeterminately Sentenced 3rd Strike

	ISL 3RD Strike (N 727)	All Other ISL Persons (N 2579)
Low	4%	9%
Moderate	60%	63%
High	36%	28%

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Indeterminately Sentenced 3rd Strike vs. Other ISL

	ISL 3RD Strike	All Other ISL Long term
Prior Sexual Offending Histories	42%	25%
Average Static-99R Score	4.0	1.7

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Gender Comparisons: Overall Risk

	Persons Housed at an Institution for Women	Persons Housed at an Institution for Men
Low Risk	21%	7%
Moderate Risk	52%	60%
High Risk	28%	33%

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Parole Decisions Associated With Each Risk Category

	Low Risk	Moderate	High Risk
Grant	61%	20%	1%
Denial	36%	70%	65%
Stipulation	3%	10%	34%

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Parole Decisions By Moderate Risk Specifier

	Lower Moderate Risk	Medium Moderate Risk	Higher Moderate Risk
Grant	38%	19%	6%
Denial	57%	72%	78%
Stipulation	5%	9%	16%

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Parole Decisions and Dynamic Risks

	Grants		Denials		Stipulations	
	Present	Relevant	Present	Relevant	Present	Relevant
Recent Problems with Self-Awareness	61%	11%	84%	42%	88%	58%
Recent Problems with Instability	13%	3%	44%	27%	62%	48%
Recent Problems with Treatment or Supervision Response	35%	8%	73%	40%	84%	65%

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Parole Decisions and Dynamic Risks

	Grants		Denials		Stipulations	
	Present	Relevant	Present	Relevant	Present	Relevant
Anticipated Problems with Personal Support	39%	6%	59%	20%	68%	30%
Anticipated Problems Managing Stress	96%	23%	99%	56%	99%	73%
Anticipated Problems with Treatment or Supervision Compliance	71%	15%	90%	49%	95%	71%

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Comparing Parole Denial Lengths

	3 YR	5 YR	7 YR	10 TO 15
Average Risks Assessed Present to Some Degree	14	16	17	17
Average Risks Assessed to Have *High Current Relevance*	4	8	11	14

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Parole Decisions and Race/Ethnicity

	Black	Latinx	White
Grants	17%	20%	17%
Denials	68%	62%	68%
Stipulations	15%	18%	15%

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The FAD at 20: Evolution and 2025 Findings

- The FAD was established in response to concerns about the timeliness, consistency, and scientific foundation of risk assessments used in parole proceedings.
- From its inception, the division was designed to provide standardized, evidence informed assessments focused on current violence risk.
- Future violence risk, as our data show, year after year, hinges on the dynamic (changeable) factors and current relevance.
- Historical risk factors (e.g., number of prior arrests), do not drive overall risk. The current relevance of those historical factors and the dynamic variables (i.e., Clinical and Risk Management factors) are what differentiate the three risk categories.
- Dynamic risks, especially when assessed to be highly relevant, best differentiate persons granted parole from those denied parole or stipulating to unsuitability.
- Risk classifications inform but do not determine parole decisions. Hearing panels consider the CRA alongside all other relevant and reliable information.
- Changes in the distribution of Low, Moderate, and High ratings are expected as the characteristics and risk management needs of the evaluated population change.
- Twenty years later, the FAD remains a dynamic, evidence informed program that continues to adapt to developments in law, scientific research, and forensic risk assessment.

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