

HRST Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



This document answers some of the most commonly asked technical and clinical questions about the HRST.

What is the Health Risk Screening Tool?

The Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST) is a web-based screening instrument designed to detect health destabilization EARLY and PREVENT preventable deaths. It is a reliable, field-tested screening tool that consists of 22 rating items, divided into 5 health categories. Each of the 22 items consist of questions answered by a trained rater. When fully answered the HRST assigns a numeric degree of health risk to the person called a Health Care Level (HCL). The scale ranges from 1 (low risk) to 6 (high risk).

What is the HRST Health Care Level (HCL)?

The HCL is assigned once a person has been fully screened. Fully screened means that all 22 rating items have been fully scored. HCL's can range from the lowest risk level (level 1) to the highest risk level (level 6). HCL's are very important as they have been shown in research to be a reliable predictor of mortality. The higher the HCL, the more risk the HRST has identified. When HCL's rise, supporters should not delay in taking action.

Who would use the HRST?

The HRST is most widely used by state and private agencies that provide or facilitate care to vulnerable populations, such as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, elderly populations as well as many other at-risk groups. It is also used by some MCO's (Managed Care Organizations).

Who can complete a screening using the HRST?

The HRST is most commonly screened by direct care staff, case managers, nurses, or Developmental Disability Professionals (DDP). The only pre-requisite is successful completion of the HRST Online Rater Training prior to completing screenings. Medical training or medical expertise is not required by the rater to complete the HRST.

What will be my role?

Your employer will inform you of what your role will be in relation to the HRST. Raters are required to go through online training prior to using the HRST. Others, who will not conduct screenings, may be required to do some orientation training so that they are informed about the basic concepts of the HRST and how to view and use the information.

How long does it take to complete an HRST screening?

Different factors can determine the length of time it takes to complete a screening, such as the medical complexity of the person. Initial ratings can take anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Updates take much less time and can often be done in a few minutes.

How frequently should the HRST be completed?

The HRST should be completed at *least* annually. Think of it as an annual checkup. However, it is important to keep the HRST updated throughout the year as changes occur. This includes information related to diagnoses, medications, and the 22 rating items.

Everyone is rated...now what?

Once everyone is rated supporters can easily determine, based on the intensity of each of the item scores, where risk is present and to what degree. In addition to this, the HRST has over 90 different reports based on the data entered during screening. This will give supporters a better perspective on the health risks for those supported. These reports are so effective and informative they have been used by some states to report to higher entities such as the Department of Justice, Department of Civil Rights, State Legislatures, and CMS.

What are the Service and Training Considerations?

Once a person has been fully screened and an HCL assigned, the HRST produces Service and Training Considerations. These Considerations help the team in a number of ways. They can help troubleshoot what may be causing the health risk, give action steps to the team on how to pursue/manage health risk, offer training topics for staff to minimize risk, and give talking points for staff when attending medical appointments with the person.

How does the HRST help me, the supporter?

If you are a family member or direct support professional, you often know the person better than most anyone. As a result of your intimate knowledge of the person, you are likely to know when things are just “not right” but you may not know or appreciate why. The HRST is designed to help you figure out what is “not right” and when to take action. If you are a case manager, the HRST helps you understand and appreciate more clinical aspects of the person. It equips you with the information you need to be a better overseer of health and safety during your routine visits with the person. If you are a nurse, the HRST helps increase your chance of clinically appreciating risks that are both obvious and, at times, not so obvious. It also helps you to train non-clinical supporters on the more clinical aspects of the person. For administrators, the HRST helps aggregate data that relate directly to staffing and support costs.

Is there any software to download?

No. The HRST is a secure, web-based program. Clients are given a specific web-address dedicated to them. All users are assigned individualized usernames and passwords.

If we already use the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®), is the HRST redundant? Is the HRST going to affect my SIS results?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®) and the HRST work great together. While the SIS looks for intensity of support, the HRST looks for health destabilization and risk. Though the scoring and results of these two tools are different, when results are combined, they give unique perspectives of the person that maximizes quality of life.

Is IntellectAbility and the HRST HIPAA compliant?

Yes. IntellectAbility abides by all laws that govern the use and transmission of private information. Our web-based software has multi-layered security features that help ensure maximum protection of sensitive data. In addition, users are assigned user-specific login information. Users are also assigned specific scopes within the application, allowing them to access only to those people they are authorized to view.

Does the HRST really work?

Most certainly. We often receive success stories of how the HRST improves the quality of life for the person and even saves lives! Take a look at this success story from a Georgia HRST user:

*"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...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 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. Having ready access to this information allows for quick review of the individual's health history, we have found this to be a valuable tool for our organization. Thanks for sharing the HRST with us."

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Will I get help if I need it?

We have various methods of getting help and offer support at any stage of usage. We offer both technical support and clinical support.