

CRIME - PICS II
M A N U A L
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NB Not all information on CRIME-PICS II is included in the Web version. All details are available in the printed copy of the Manual. This WEB version was updated in October 2013.

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INTRODUCTION

CRIME-PICS II, which has been in widespread use since 1994, is the improved and carefully tested successor to **CRIME-PICS**, an instrument originally developed by the authors with the support of the Mid-Glamorgan Probation Service. The instrument offers probation services, prisons and other agencies a convenient and standardised means of measuring changes in offenders' attitudes to offending.

Traditionally, the assessment of the impact of interventions with offenders has been made on the basis of simple activity measures such as compliance levels, or crude outcome measures such as reconviction rates. It is now widely recognised that, while such data are clearly very important, they do not alone provide a satisfactory picture of the degree to which a service has brought about change in offenders. Reconviction rate, moreover, is not only a very blunt measure, but involves an appreciable time lapse before outcomes can be evaluated.

CRIME-PICS II, with its special focus upon attitude change, offers a powerful additional tool for assessing the impact of intervention with offenders. It can be used, alongside other measures, as an important indicator to help evaluate the success of any intervention. Furthermore, changes in **CRIME-PICS** scores have been shown to be associated with reconviction outcomes.

The **CRIME-PICS II** instrument is straightforward to administer and can be scored quickly and easily. The whole process including scoring usually takes no more than 15

minutes. This time is further reduced if the new downloadable scoring tool is used.

The instrument consists of 20 questionnaire items and a 15-item "Problems" inventory. The offender's responses can be translated into FIVE scores, which together provide a profile for that individual. Raw scores can also be translated where appropriate to scaled scores on a 0-9 scale, so that each conforms to a broadly comparable metric.

The main score (which is referred to as 'G') represents that person's GENERAL ATTITUDE TO OFFENDING at the point in time at which the questionnaire was completed.

In addition to this general score, the questionnaire provides specific measures of the offender's:

- anticipation of re-offending ('A')
- victim hurt denial ('V')
- evaluation of crime as worthwhile ('E')
- perception of current life problems ('P')

Thus a numerical profile of the offender's attitudes on five scales can be obtained. This is a snapshot at one point in time. A similar snapshot obtained by repeating the process at some later time enables the officer to identify any change on each of the five scales. A profile of change can be obtained, for example, by comparing scores at different times.

In the **CRIME-PICS II** scoring system, each of the five scales is scored in such a way that a high score indicates that the

offender has attitudes which predispose towards involvement in crime, or, in the case of the Problems scale, has problems in many areas of his or her life. A reduction in the raw score from one administration of the instrument to the next is interpreted as an improvement in the offender's attitude or, in the case of the P score, as a reduction in the number of problems the person identifies in his or her life.

In addition to the five scale scores obtained, each of the individual items on the questionnaire provides useful information in itself. For example, specific items in the Problems inventory provide a quick scan of issues in the offender's current lifestyle which are problematic. An offender's responses to these and the other items can provide important diagnostic information for the officer working with the individual, and may form the basis for later examination and discussion.

CRIME-PICS II scores can be aggregated across groups of offenders to evaluate general patterns of change. This is particularly useful to those who wish to evaluate and/or demonstrate the impact of special intervention programmes.

There have been very many important research studies based on CRIME-PICS scores, one of the earliest published being that by James McGuire and his team: 'Short Term Effects of Probation Programs: An Evaluative Study', International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 39 (1), 1995. Individual services have also used the instrument to conduct substantial in-house evaluations of particular programmes. A list of available research reports, academic journal articles and other

publications are available on the CRIME-PICS website:

<http://www.crime-pics.co.uk>

Apart from their value as a tool in research projects, aggregate data from **CRIME-PICS II** are of interest to managers and policy makers, providing them with an additional numerical index of the overall impact of the service. The instrument allows managers to demonstrate effectiveness in a standard way that is easily communicated and is statistically meaningful.

In sum, extensive use with tens of thousands of offenders shows that **CRIME-PICS II** is user friendly and stimulates interest among offenders. It provides information that has immediate relevance for the work of individual officers, as well as giving a valid base line measure against which the effects of any intervention programme can be measured.

THE CRIME-PICS II INSTRUMENT

The **CRIME-PICS II** instrument is in four parts.

The first consists of a number of items summarising the offender's current status and history of past offending, together with various demographic characteristics. This may be freely modified to suit the particular purposes of different services.

The second part is the 20-item **CRIME-PICS II** questionnaire. Twenty statements are presented, and the offender has to indicate the degree to which he or she agrees or disagrees with each of the statements. The response options are "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree".

The third part is the PROBLEMS checklist - an inventory of 15 common problem areas in people's lives. In each case the offender is asked by the person administering the instrument whether each item represents "A big problem", "A problem", "A small problem", or "No problem" in their life at present.

The fourth part of the questionnaire provides a summary page for the offender's scores on the dimensions G, A, V, E and P.

CRIME-PICS II was initially designed for administration to an individual offender. However, its administration to groups of offenders is now widespread. Details for both forms of administration are given below. Although the instrument can be administered by the officer who has generally had the most contact with the offender, it is recommended that if **CRIME-**

PICS II is to be used for formal evaluation purposes (for example, for assessing the effectiveness of a particular intervention programme) it should be administered by someone other than the officer generally responsible for an intervention with the offender.

The instrument can be administered a number of times to the same offender, and will be particularly valuable in monitoring changes, both in terms of the offender's general attitude to offending and in terms of other specific sub scales. In most cases it will be appropriate to construct a profile for an individual offender at least twice, once near the beginning of intervention and once near the end.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

(1) INDIVIDUAL OFFENDERS

The instrument should be administered in private, and in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible. It is in the nature of such instruments that some offenders are likely to produce answers which they think may be expected rather than reflecting what they actually feel. The risk of this will be reduced if the administrator fosters a climate that is friendly, supportive and non-judgmental. Do be as informative as you possibly can about the purpose of the questionnaire, stressing, if appropriate, that anonymity is sustained in summarising the findings from the questionnaires.

In order to foster such an atmosphere, the administrator is permitted to paraphrase or explain particular sentences if this is necessary, for example in the case of an offender with learning difficulties. The important point is that the offender should understand each item and should be encouraged to give an honest answer.

Begin by explaining to the offender that the probation service, prison service, or other agency, needs to understand offenders' attitudes as much as possible, and that offenders are now being asked about their attitudes using a questionnaire. Reassure the offender that there are no right or wrong answers - "it's not a test" - and express a hope that they will be relaxed and will just say what they honestly feel.

Although as a general rule each statement should be read in its original form, the administrator has some freedom to paraphrase or explain particular sentences if it becomes clear that the offender does not understand the item. The questionnaire should be administered in the spirit of a relaxed interview, rather than in a formal (and possibly intimidating) manner. Avoid conversation following the offender's responses, however, and avoid leading them towards particular responses.

The following might be used to introduce the questionnaire part of the instrument (however, try to avoid **reading** this or any other formulation):

"I am going to read out some sentences, and I want you to tell me whether you agree with them or not. Some you will probably agree with, and some you will probably disagree with. Some you might not agree OR disagree with. As I read each one out to you, tell me whether you Agree , Disagree , or Neither agree nor disagree".

For each of the first few responses, after the offender has said that they "Agree" or "Disagree" with the statement, ask them to indicate whether they "STRONGLY" Agree (or Disagree) or "JUST" Agree (or disagree). Most people will soon pick up the 5-point response convention. However, it is essential that all items - including the first few - are coded using the 5-point scale.

When you have established an offender's response, clearly circle the appropriate label "SA", "A", "N", "D" or "SD".

If the questionnaire is being used for offenders with custodial sentences, questionnaire item 8 should read: I definitely won't get into trouble with the police in the six months after my release

Next, the offender should be asked to respond to the Problems Inventory. This might be introduced in the following way:

"Now I'd like to ask you about the kinds of problems that many people have in their life, and how these affect your own life. As I read through the list, I want you to tell me whether each one is 'A big problem', 'A problem', 'A small problem' or 'No problem' in your life at present. The first is 'Problems with money'"

The offender should be regularly reminded of all of the scale points, because it is essential that all items are scored using the four-point scale. When you have established the offender's response, clearly circle the appropriate label "BP", "P", "SP" or "NO".

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

(2) A GROUP OF OFFENDERS

This can be more challenging for an administrator, but may be employed for the convenience of using just one testing session for a group of offenders. Nevertheless, the questionnaire must be completed independently, without consultation or discussion between offenders.

The issues discussed above, under administration instructions for individual offenders, are relevant here. In particular, preparation becomes especially important. Individual offenders will be thinking: Who does the administrator represent? How long will it last? What if I don't know the answers? Will it be personal? What will the administrator do with my answers? The administrator should be prepared to deal with such questions. In addition, he or she will also find it helpful to check in advance for any known literacy difficulties and ensure that the room for the administration is comfortable for themselves and the offenders.

The administrator will find it helpful to go through the instructions to the questionnaire with the whole group before allowing individuals to complete the questionnaire on their own. In order to check that each individual is completing the questionnaires properly, it will be necessary for the administrator to look at what they are doing as they are completing the questions. It will be helpful for the groups to be told this in advance. Group members should be informed that they may clearly cross out an answer made in error, and then

simply to circle the answer they wish to give. When the group are reminded that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, this an opportunity to stress that answers should not be copied. Once group members have begun on their own, the administrator should show interest and ask if there are any questions, but the administrator should be aware of giving people sufficient privacy to think about and complete the questions.

CRIME-PICS II SCORING

There are several methods of scoring: Using the computer scoring aid (see Web Site for Download Tool), by Hand, or using statistical software such as SPSS. The last is commonly used in large scale research studies. The user will follow the details provided below in ‘scoring by hand’ for using any statistical package

Computer scoring aid

The user simply enters optional information to identify the offender, then enters responses to the Attitude questionnaire items and the Problem questionnaire items. The scoring programme gives both raw and standardised scores.

Scoring by hand

For the CRIME-PICS II scores, all data, S1 to S20 is used.

1 Reversing some scores

Each item S1 to S20 has a value between 1 and 5 - for 4 of these items, the score needs to be “reversed” to reflect the nature of the question – this is done by recoding the data using the ($x = 6 - x$) formula (so 1 becomes 5, 2 becomes 4 etc. – 3 stays the same). The four S items that need to be reversed are S8 S9 S15 and S19

2 *Calculating total raw scores*

The dataset S1 to S20 (now with the reversed scores) is then used to calculate 4 sub-scales G A V and E. This is achieved in each case by simply adding certain data items

G (“GENERAL ATTITUDE TO OFFENDING”)

This total raw score is the sum of S1 to S20 WITH THE EXCEPTION OF S2 S13 and S18 So the scores of 17 items are added to give the raw G score (giving a valid range for the G raw score of 17 – 85)

A (“ANTICIPATION OF RE-OFFENDING”)

The A raw score is the sum of 6 items - S3 S4 S8 S9 S14 S19

V (“VICTIM HURT DENIAL”)

The V raw score is the sum of 3 items - S2 S13 S18

E (“EVALUATION OF CRIME AS WORTHWHILE”)

The E raw score is the sum of 4 items - S1 S5 S7 S10
Finally, the Total Raw PERCEPTION OF CURRENT LIFE PROBLEMS score is simply the addition of all items P1 to P15 (valid range therefore 15 – 60)

SCORE CONVERSION AND SCORE PROFILE

Each of the five raw scores should now be transferred to the score sheet on the back page of the questionnaire. For evaluation purposes, those who analyse **CRIME-PICS II** data will wish to work only with the raw scores, since these provide greater discrimination. Indeed, for a fine-grain analysis, changes in the scores for particular items may be of interest.

However, it is possible to transform the raw scores to scale scores. To transform the raw scores to their “scaled score” equivalents, use the Conversion Table below.

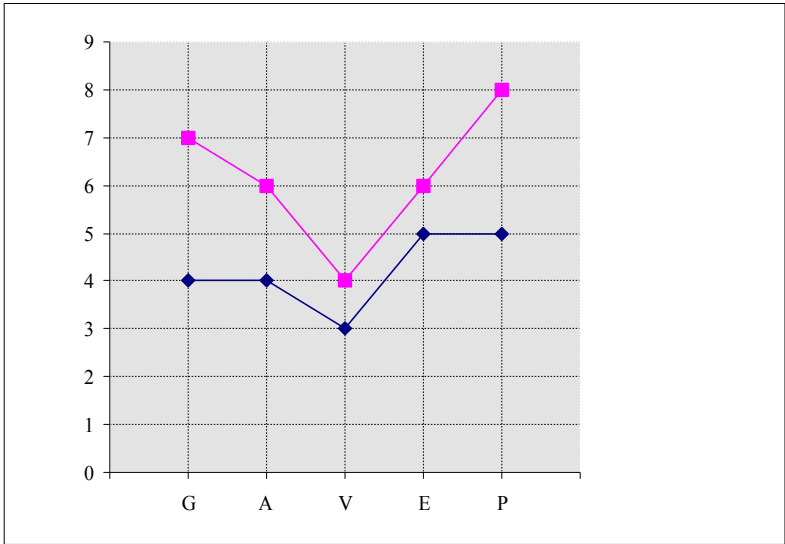
RAW SCORES TO SCALED SCORES

| G | A | V | E | P | SCALED |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| 17-34 | 6-8 | 3-4 | 4-7 | 15-16 | 0 |
| 35-38 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 17-19 | 1 |
| 39-40 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 20-22 | 2 |
| 41-42 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 23-25 | 3 |
| 43-44 | 12-13 | 8 | 11 | 26 | 4 |
| 45-46 | 14 | 9 | 12 | 27-29 | 5 |
| 47-48 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 30-32 | 6 |
| 49-51 | 16 | 11 | 14 | 33-36 | 7 |
| 52-54 | 17-18 | 12 | 15 | 37-40 | 8 |
| 55-85 | 19-30 | 13-15 | 16-20 | 41-60 | 9 |

Locate the raw score obtained for a particular scale in the column of the Table relating to that scale, and then follow the row across to the right until you reach the last column, which provides the equivalent scaled score.

All scaled scores are within the range 0-9. The scaled scores for each of the five scales should be entered on the score sheet on the back page of the questionnaire immediately after having been read from the Table. It is now an easy matter to present the scores for the scales graphically on the chart provided on the back page of the questionnaire.

If **CRIME-PICS II** has been administered to the same offender on a previous occasion, the scaled scores from the previous administration can also be entered on the score sheet, and a difference calculated. Remember that for each scale a *decreased* score represents an improvement in the offender's attitude (or a perceived reduction in life problems). The changes can also be illustrated graphically, perhaps by plotting the two sets of scaled scores using different symbols as in the following example.



DERIVATION OF THE SCALED SCORES

For each of the dimensions. G, A, V, E and P, scaled scores were derived in the same way. Consider G as an example: the frequencies of G scores obtained by the initial standardisation sample of 422 probation offenders were inspected and divided into ten categories. Each of the ten categories was defined by a score range which contained approximately 10% of the offenders.

The lowest scoring range (i.e., containing the 10% of offenders who had scored lowest) was assigned a scaled score of 0, and so on, with the highest score range assigned a scale score of 9. Thus, approximately 50% of the offenders obtained transformed scores in the 0-4 range and the other 50% obtained transformed scores in the 5-9 range.

Remember that each scale is scored in such a way that a high score is undesirable. Thus someone who scores a '9' on the Problems dimension has more problems than at least 90% of the standardisation sample. As the person perceives his or her life as less problematic, this score would be expected to fall.

RELIABILITY OF THE SCALES

This information is based on the original M&A Research sample of 422 offenders only. The reader is encouraged to consult the more recent publications detailed on the M&A Website.

For a measurement to be useful it must be reliable, and there are a number of ways in which the reliability of a measure can be evaluated. One important psychometric indicator of the reliability of a scale is how well the relevant items “hold together” to form an integrated scale. This is labelled the “internal reliability”. Another important indicator of reliability is the extent to which a measure gives the same results when administered twice to the same offender group. This is referred to as the “test-retest reliability”.

Internal Reliability

It is important to establish whether the scores from the items that make up a scale are correlated with each other in the predicted direction. It is also possible to compute one overall estimate of such internal consistency for each scale. This is known as the “alpha coefficient”, and it is generally advised that an alpha value of .70 or above indicates good internal consistency. However, this coefficient reflects the number of items in a scale as well as the inter-correlations within a scale. This means that higher alpha values are generally more difficult to establish for short scales. The Table below provides the alpha coefficients for each of the **CRIME-PICS II** scales.

| SCALE | | alpha coefficient |
|--|---|-------------------|
| GENERAL ATTITUDE TO OFFENDING (17 items) | G | 0.76 |
| ANTICIPATION OF RE-OFFENDING (6 items) | A | 0.75 |
| VICTIM HURT DENIAL (3 items) | V | 0.73 |
| EVALUATION OF CRIME AS WORTHWHILE (4 items) | E | 0.55 |
| PERCEPTION OF CURRENT LIFE PROBLEMS (15 items) | P | 0.83 |

It can be seen that sub-scale E (“Evaluation of crime as worthwhile”) fails to meet the alpha “adequacy” criterion, although the four items that make up this scale do significantly correlate with each other. From the internal reliability data alone, however, scores on this scale should be treated with caution.

Thus in terms of internal consistency, at least four of the five sub-scales are reliable.

Test-Retest Reliability and Test Sensitivity

A reliable measuring instrument also provides stable information; it should not yield different scores if administered by different persons, nor should it generally yield different scores on a day to day basis. **CRIME-PICS II** should yield

stable information of this kind, yet it should also be *sensitive* to real change in clients attitudes, which would lead us to expect score changes in specified directions.

The following Table is based on a sample of clients who had undergone intervention programmes, with varying test-retest periods. We would therefore expect score changes as a result of interventions, but to meet the test-retest reliability criterion, all scales would be expected to provide significant associations between Time 1 and Time 2: **CRIME-PICS II** clearly meets the test-retest criterion - all coefficients are highly significant. Note these coefficients are correlations not alpha coefficients.

| SCALE | | correlations |
|--|---|--------------|
| GENERAL ATTITUDE TO OFFENDING (17 items) | G | 0.63 |
| ANTICIPATION OF RE-OFFENDING (6 items) | A | 0.58 |
| VICTIM HURT DENIAL (3 items) | V | 0.59 |
| EVALUATION OF CRIME AS WORTHWHILE (4 items) | E | 0.56 |
| PERCEPTION OF CURRENT LIFE PROBLEMS (15 items) | P | 0.55 |

Each of the scales also demonstrates movements in the predicted direction, i.e. towards a more desirable attitude to offending.

VALIDITY OF THE SCALES

This information is based on the original M&A Research sample of 422 offenders only. The reader is encouraged to consult the more recent publications detailed on the M&A Website.

CRIME-PICS II has good face validity. It was devised on the basis of extensive discussions and trials with probation officers and covers all of the important general dimensions that appear to be relevant to attitudes to offending.

In the psychometric context, “validity” refers to the issue of whether a test or scale actually measures what it is supposed to be measuring. The “concurrent validity” of a measure can be determined by establishing whether the measure discriminates between groups that should be different on the variable that is supposedly being assessed. In the specific context of **CRIME-PICS II**, we would expect that certain client groups would differ in terms of their scores on various scales.

In order to assess whether the **CRIME-PICS II** scales were valid, we examined the relationship between the scales and the following variables:

- i) A composite risk-of-reoffending score
- ii) Number of previous convictions
- iii) Number of previous custodial sentences
- iv) Type of (recent) offence

i) The composite risk of re-offending (ROR) score used for this analysis was routinely employed by the Mid-Glamorgan Probation Service and is similar to scores used in many probation services within the United Kingdom. It takes into account the client's age, offence type, previous convictions, and a number of the other factors. We predicted that a higher ROR score should be associated (positively correlated) with the **CRIME-PICS II** scales. This proved to be the case, with three of relationships being particularly strong: those with higher risk of re-offending scores tend to have higher scores on the **CRIME-PICS II** G, A and E scales (General Attitude to Offending, Anticipation of Re-offending, and Evaluation of Crime as Worthwhile).

ii) and iii) Clients were banded into four groups on the basis of the number of their previous convictions, and two groups on the basis of whether they had or had not had a previous custodial sentence. We then analyzed our data to determine whether there were any differences between the **CRIME-PICS II** scores of these different groups.

Each of the **CRIME-PICS II** scores discriminated between the groups in a meaningful fashion. The following relationships were particularly strong:

- the group with the lowest number of previous convictions (two or less) had the lowest scores on the G and A scales. The group with the highest number of convictions (eleven or more) had the highest scores on these two scales.

- a similar pattern was evident for those who had experienced a custodial sentence: they had significantly higher G and A scores than those who had not had a previous custodial sentence. Those who had had a custodial sentence also reported significantly more 'Problems' in their current lifestyle. However, this group also acknowledged greater harm for the victim(s) of their crimes (a lower V score) which is of course likely to reflect the type of offence committed.

iv) Client offences were originally coded in terms of the Home Office classification system. For the purposes of our analysis, we conflated certain of these categories and formed three broader groups:

- a) offences against the person
- b) property offences
- c) motor vehicle related offences.

Differences in the **CRIME-PICS II** scores of these three groups provided clear support for the validity of the scales. As one would expect, those convicted of offences against the person (who are generally less likely to reoffend than property offenders) had significantly lower scores than each of the other groups for each of the scales. The group convicted of property offences reported the most problems.

SUMMARY

CRIME-PICS II can be used in a variety of ways. In particular:

- 1) With individual offenders: A **CRIME-PICS II** questionnaire administered during an early meeting with an offender will provide information about the individual's attitudes and perceived problems. This can suggest issues for further discussion and intervention on a case basis. It also provides a baseline measure against which future changes can be assessed: comparing the scores obtained from two administrations of the **CRIME-PICS II** questionnaire gives an indication of how the individual has changed on a number of key dimensions.
- 2) With groups of offenders, resulting scores can be aggregated to allow comparisons, for example between offender types, and before and after specific types of intervention. If a particular facet of offending behaviour is being targeted, then specific **CRIME-PICS II** dimensions might be specified as the most appropriate outcome indicator. Moreover, profiles of different offenders may help in the selection of particular individuals for the most appropriate type of intervention.

When considering precisely how **CRIME-PICS II** is to be used, it will be helpful to keep the following summary interpretations in mind:

G - GENERAL ATTITUDE TO OFFENDING (17 items)

A person with a low G score believes that offending is not an acceptable way of life. In essence, they are saying "Crime is not for me".

A - ANTICIPATION OF RE-OFFENDING (6 items)

This measure provides a direct assessment of the individual's acceptance of the likelihood of re-offending. A low score indicates a resolve not to offend again.

V - VICTIM HURT DENIAL (3 items)

This is a measure of the degree to which the offender rejects or accepts that his or her crime had adverse effects on a victim. This will be of much clearer relevance to those convicted of certain offences. A low score indicates an acceptance that offending does have adverse effects for victims.

E - EVALUATION OF CRIME AS WORTHWHILE (4 items)

A measure of the degree to which the individual accepts or rejects the view that crime is a useful way of obtaining goods or of getting excitement or "kicks". A low score indicates a rejection of the view that crime has benefits that outweigh the costs.

P - PERCEPTION OF CURRENT LIFE PROBLEMS (15 items)

A measure of the number of problem areas the person perceives in his or her life. The higher the score the more problem areas the individual has identified.

Finally, we hope you have found our Website useful. If you have any further questions or comments please contact us. Once again, our email address is ma.research@yahoo.co.uk