



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 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 illness, health related events and even death. It is a reliable, field-tested screening tool that consists of 22 rating items, divided into 5 health categories. Each of the 22 items consists of questions answered by the 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). There are also designated areas within the online program for diagnosis and medication entry.

### Why is early detection of health risk and destabilization in vulnerable populations so important?

Early detection of any health risk is important. Studies show that the sooner these health risks are identified and acted upon, the higher the chances of avoiding more acute, chronic conditions of these risks or even death. This is particularly true for those who may already be at risk due to a condition or diagnosis. For example, individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities can be predisposed to health risk and destabilization. Many of these individuals cannot speak to verbalize symptoms. In addition, behaviors will often mask the signs of hidden, life threatening conditions. Sadly, often times these symptoms go unappreciated until after it is too late.

The HRST flags these risks thus allowing the team to address them proactively rather and reactively.

### Who would use the HRST?

The HRST is used by both State and private agencies that provide or facilitate care to vulnerable populations, such as individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, behavioral health, traumatic brain injuries, aging populations as well as many other at-risk groups.

### Is there any software to download?

No. The HRST is a web-based program so there is no software to download.

### What is involved in implementing the system?

It's a relatively simple process. First we assign you a secure log-in and password for a training account. Once all future Raters have completed the training, they will have access to the tool in your live account. We will monitor your account entries to ensure the rating is being done properly and offer



support as needed. We have highly skilled Technical and Clinical support available to you for any questions along the way.

## What is the HRST Online Rater Training?

The HRST Online Rater Training is designed to give the user all the information and training they need to be able to accurately score the HRST. It is a work-at-your-own-pace model and can take about 6-10 hours to complete. This training also gives basic information about important medical conditions in addition to how to use the HRST online application.

## Who can complete the HRST for an individual?

The HRST was designed to be completed by those who do not have a clinical background although clinicians often use the HRST. Individuals such as Direct Care Staff, Case Managers, Support Coordinators, Nurses, Social Workers or Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) can complete the HRST. The only prerequisite is successful completion of the HRST Online Rater Training by the Rater prior to completing screenings. Medical training or medical expertise is not required by the Rater to screen using the HRST.

## 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. Generally, the initial data entry takes the longest as the user is entering data related to diagnoses, medications, and ratings. The initial ratings can take anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes. Updates tend to take much less time and can often be done in less than 20 minutes.

## How frequently should the HRST be completed on an individual?

It is recommended that the HRST be completed at least annually. However, it is important to keep the HRST updated as changes occur to medications, diagnosis and ratings items.

## What is the importance of entering screening information into the HRST?

Once the HRST for a person is completely filled out, the HRST will be able to note where health destabilization/risk is occurring. It will also assign a Health Care Level (1-6) that corresponds with the level and severity of destabilization/risk. The system takes all this information and produces action steps that tell you or the support team how to respond to these areas of health risk and destabilization. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.** Why? If you know where destabilization and health risks are occurring and know how to go into action, it is highly unlikely that the person will experience more chronic or acute levels of those risks. The HRST also has a robust reporting module that will help users on various levels know important health related information about the individuals who have been



screened. The HRST can be used to inform staffing or clinical hours, cost containment and help ensure continuity of care. The HRST will also help you to better track fluctuations in the individual's health. You can even use this information in the Individualized Support Plan or Treatment Plan.

## Can the HRST produce reports and trend data?

The HRST has over 90 different reports based on the information you have entered which give you a better perspective of your agency and the people you serve. Our reports are so good they have been used by some states to report to higher agencies such as the Department of Justice, Department of Civil Rights, State Legislatures and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

## What are the Service and Training Considerations?

Once individuals are rated, not only will you have a health baseline useful for tracking each individual's health condition but also the HRST will generate both Service and Training Considerations specific to that person. 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/or give talking points for staff when attending doctor's appointments with the person. Most of our success stories come from users who have used the Service and Training Considerations.

## How does the HRST help me as a nurse or direct caregiver?

As the support staff, you know the person better than almost anyone. As a result of your intimate knowledge them, you are likely to know when things are just "not right". The HRST is designed to help you figure out what is "not right". Think of the HRST as a troubleshooting guide to help you better identify and respond to the health needs of the individual. It will also help you identify and respond to health-related items that you may not even be aware of yet.

## If we already use the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®), is the HRST redundant?

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 Health Risk Screening, Inc. HIPAA compliant?

Yes. HRS, Inc. abides by all laws that govern the use and transmission of private information. The HRST 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 to the application.



Users are also assigned specific scopes within the application, allowing them to access only those individuals necessary.

## 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 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.*

*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. M. W., R.N., Director Magnolia House PCH, Inc. – Georgia*