Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Bureau of Quality Improvement Services
Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services

RISK MATRIX

A risk matrix is a voluntary support tool to visually analyze information to help make informed choices and decisions as well as balance risk. A risk matrix tool is unique to the individual, their experiences, their situation, and their tolerance for risk. The risk matrix will assist the team with a basis for a focused discussion and the ability to identify areas where education might be needed for informed choice. Each potential risk is evaluated by using two scales in the risk matrix: severity and likelihood.

The severity scale is used to determine the potential consequences of the risk. Consequences will vary depending upon the risk itself as well as the individual who is being evaluated and will range from negligible to major. The severity level increases as the potential ramifications intensify.

Severity Scale

Level	Severity	Description
1	Negligible	Routine operations can handle the concern. Consequences are not expected.
2	Minor	Little to no injury; participation in desired activities could be delayed; relationships may become strained; may run out of money.
3	Moderate	Injuries may require more than first aid; arrest or conflict with the law; loss of employment or desired activity; social isolation from family and friends.
4	Serious	Serious but temporary injury; inability to pay bills; imprisonment.
5	Major	Death or permanent disability

The second scale in the risk matrix is the likelihood scale. The team may use this scale to agree upon the probability of the potential risk occurring based on the level descriptions. The likelihood level increases as the probability of occurrence increases.
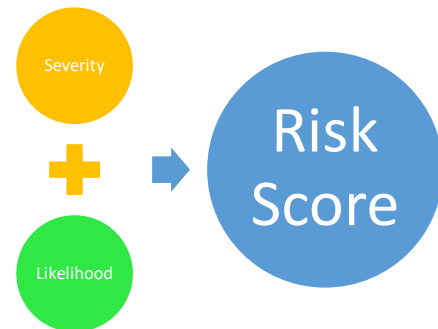
Likelihood Scale

Level	Likelihood	Description
1	Rare	Little or no chance of occurrence ~ less than 5% probability
2	Unlikely	A rare combination of factors would be required for an incident to result ~ 10% probability
3	Possible	Not certain to happen but additional factors may result in an incident ~ 50% probability
4	Probable	Likely to occur ~ 75% probability
5	Almost Certain	Expected to occur ~ 95% probability

Disclaimer: The use of this tool is not a requirement for services received through the Bureau of the Developmental Disabilities Services.

To use the Risk Matrix, the team begins by assigning one severity and one likelihood rating to each potential risk. This process can be completed by each team member doing their own and then discussing as a group or discussing each potential risk as a group. Eventually, the team should have agreement on the both the severity and likelihood rating.

Risk Matrix

Risk Matrix		Likelihood of Occurrence				
		Rare (1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Probable (4)	Almost Certain (5)
Severity	Negligible (1)	2	3	4	5	6
	Minor (2)	3	4	5	6	7
	Moderate (3)	4	5	6	7	8
	Serious (4)	5	6	7	8	9
	Major (5)	6	7	8	9	10

The total risk score for each potential risk is determined by adding together the severity rating and likelihood rating.

Severity + Likelihood → Risk Score

Risk Scoring

Total	Severity\Likelihood	Description
2	Negligible\Rare	Occurrence not expected and no harm/injury expected if there is an occurrence. Routine operations can handle without additional interventions.
3-4	Minor\Unlikely	Little to no injury possible, serious harm very unlikelyr; the IST should provide education on potential risks and informed choice to ensure care is taken when performing activity.
5	Moderate\Possible	May result in injury that requires more than first aid; the IST should provide education on potential risks but allow the person to choose the level of risk desired to achieve their good life.
6-7	Serious\Probable	Injury may be serious but temporary; the IST should critically assess the risks, provide education but allow the person to choose the level of risk desired to achieve their good life. As agreed upon by the IST, risk mitigation plans should be developed, staff trained, monitored, and adjusted as appropriate.
8-10	Major\Almost Certain	Serious injury or harm will probably occur; the IST should critically assess the risks, provide education but allow the person to choose the level of risk desired to achieve their good life. As agreed upon by the IST, risk mitigation plans should be developed, staff trained, monitored, and adjusted as appropriate.