

The authors shown below prepared the following report in response to RFI from the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet. This study is broken down into two major phases, which will be presented in two major reports. This report will contain *Phase 1* of the project: *Evaluation of the Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI)*. An accompanying report will be submitted in June 2016 and will contain *Phase 2* of the project: *Development and Implementation of a Revised Vulnerability Tool*.

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Dictionary of Terms

For consistency, the following terms will be used throughout this report:

KJPSC: Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet

UK Research Team: The UK Research Team refers to a 3-member team led by the principal investigator, Dr. Michael Toland. Dr. Toland was responsible for guiding analyses used to evaluate the instrument, as well as the direct supervision of the research assistant, Abigail Love. In addition to Dr. Toland and Abigail Love, Dr. Jessica Hearn oversaw the research assistant, data collection process, evaluation, instrument development, and communication with the CJSAC Liaison.

CJSAC Liaison: Marjorie Stanek: Ms. Stanek is the Research Coordinator of the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (CJSAC). Ms. Stanek is responsible for supervising the evaluation and subsequent activities completed by the UK Research Team.

DJJ Facilities: Kentucky juvenile facilities used in this study including detention centers, group homes, and youth development centers.

DJJ Staff Members: Staff members that currently hold positions within Kentucky juvenile facilities including detention centers, group homes, and youth development centers.

VAI: The *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument* being evaluated.

VSPA-S: Victimization and Sexual/Physical Aggression Screener, which is the revised version of the VAI.

Abstract

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requires all correctional agencies to screen incoming individuals for risk of sexual victimization or perpetration. This part of the act ensured individuals residing in correctional facilities were kept safe from rape and sexual assault while completing their term within the facility. This study evaluated one such instrument and accompanying data within the state of Kentucky. Following PREA, the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice implemented federal regulations across the state of Kentucky that would apply to all facilities and contain methods of assessing risk within juvenile justice facilities. The *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument* is the risk assessment used in Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities, and this project focused on the evaluation of this instrument. Analysis included both qualitative and quantitative measures and results supported a need for a revised instrument.

Keywords: risk assessment, Department of Juvenile Justice, sexual victimization, physical victimization

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Evaluation of the Vulnerability Assessment Instrument

According to data collected by the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice in 2011, there were 7,980 juvenile intakes in the Commonwealth of Kentucky that resulted in 126,834 facility days. The average age of this juvenile population was 16, and charges varied from murder and assault to shoplifting and theft (Department of Juvenile Justice, 2011). Because a range of individuals reside in these facilities, staff are challenged by the need to identify youths' vulnerability to sexual or physical assault as well as susceptibility to sexually or physically aggressive behavior upon an individual's entry into a Kentucky juvenile justice facility. This need for identification is supported by federal legislation that provides resources to help facilities protect individuals from sexual abuse in correctional institutions across the country (Prison, 2015). Once identified as a vulnerable individual, the youth may receive more frequent and/or heightened supervision, a variety of diverse room placements, as well as additional interventions to ensure their safety (Prison, 2015). Similar interventions are available for those that may demonstrate aggressive or violent behavior.

The current instrument used within the Commonwealth of Kentucky to screen incoming youth that may require these interventions is called the *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument* (VAI). As a part of a more comprehensive response to the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) legislation, the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice implemented a vulnerability assessment process, designed to help identify those individuals that were in need of additional supervision or other interventions. These youth fall into two categories: those that are at risk of being physically or sexually victimized and those that are likely to engage in these acts against others while in confinement. The original attempt, the VAI, was derived from two similar tools already in existence, New Zealand's *Prison Youth Vulnerability Scale* and the Colorado Division of

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Youth Corrections' *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument*. Based on the responses collected during the screen, staff worked to identify interventions that will help to reduce risk, which can include things like placing the juvenile in an individual room placement or increasing staff supervision. The VAI supports the 2003 PREA through instrumentation that can be used across Kentucky to reduce violence in juvenile correctional facilities by guiding staff in the placement of youth who may be at risk of sexually or violently victimizing others or who have the potential to be victimized while in confinement.

In November 2014, the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet (KJPSC) received a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This funding was awarded to projects attempting to establish “zero-tolerance” cultures within correctional facilities, and as a part of this project, the KJPSC put forth a proposal for research and evaluation services from a variety of state universities. The project would include an evaluation of the current VAI as well as any recommendations for improvements and/or changes. Researchers at the University of Kentucky responded to that request, and the following report details the project conducted as well as the conclusions drawn from the collected data. This project was broken down into two major phases, which will be presented in two reports. The first, titled *Evaluation of the Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI)*, contains information about Phase 1 of the project, and a subsequent report, *Development and Implementation of a Revised Vulnerability Tool*, will be submitted in summer, 2016. It will contain information about *Phase 2* of this project. To evaluate the current VAI used in Kentucky, the UK research team collected and analyzed data in various forms including a qualitative analysis of staff attitudes and current practices as well as quantitative data collection from previous administration of the VAI.

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The purpose of *Phase 1* was to provide background information regarding the Kentucky VAI. This report will serve to 1) provide background information and details of a literature review, 2) explore the data collection methods used to evaluate the VAI, 3) detail the predictability of the VAI to incident reports, and 4) report future plans and research that will be carried out and reported in *Phase 2*. The evaluation questions for this phase of the project included:

- 1.) What are staff opinions of the VAI?
- 2.) What is the degree to which DJJ staff consistently scored youth with the VAI based on how it is expected to be used?
- 3.) How well does the VAI predict reports of incidents (IRs)?

Background

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Federal PREA legislation was passed in 2003, and the act provided funds for research, information, resources, and recommendations designed to protect individuals residing in correctional facilities within the United States from rape/sexual assault (Prison, 2015). The National PREA Resource Center began as a common place for states and localities to find resources and support as they sought to implement the act. In addition, the legislation created the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission who wrote standards for the elimination of prison rape that went into effect in August 2012. The evaluation conducted within this project will serve to better support the implementation of the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) both in Kentucky's juvenile facilities and on a broader scale.

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Risk Assessment

For a population of individuals residing in correctional facilities, general risk assessment “refers to the process of determining an offender’s risk of reoffending, receiving technical violations, failing to appear before the court, or experiencing other negative outcomes” (Austin, Johnson, & Weitzer, 2005, p. 5). Risk assessment is vital as it assists staff as they make decisions about help, treatment, safety, risk management, and placement (Rich, 2011). In the case of the VAI, it is intended to assess an individual’s vulnerability of engaging in or being victim to sexual and/or physical harm. A risk assessment is sought-after in this case because the results guide staff members at DJJ facilities in choosing a placement for youth that will minimize future negative behavior and outcomes. In order to be successful, a risk assessment instrument must have objective scoring and contain items that can be easily and reliably measured and are statistically linked with future behavior (Austin et al., 2005).

Vulnerability assessment instrument (VAI). Following the enactment of PREA legislation, a number of projects were implemented by state departments of juvenile justice to address methods for assessing a youth’s risk while confined within juvenile correctional facilities. One such project in the state of Kentucky included introduction of an instrument, the VAI, which intended to evaluate the vulnerability of youth residing in these facilities. The VAI, which was implemented in April 2013, assesses the vulnerability of engaging in or being victim to sexual and/or physical exploitation among youth confined to out of home placements in Kentucky’s juvenile justice facilities. The VAI is one of the assessment tools used by staff to screen for various types of risk or threats. It is administered along with a range of other instruments and other screening tools that are used to determine a youth’s treatment needs. These include measures of substance abuse, anger control, psychological wellbeing, and

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educational history, among others. These intake screening tools or assessments include the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Second Version (MAYSI-2), Childhood Trust Events Survey, Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism (ERASOR 2.0), and the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs – Quick (GAIN-Q). The MAYSI-2 screens for juveniles who may have special mental health needs (Grisso & Barnum, 2001). The Childhood Trust Events Survey screens the level of exposure the youth may or may not have had to traumatic events (Pearl, 2000). The ERASOR 2.0 is a checklist that estimates the short-term risk of a sexual re-offense for the juvenile (Worling & Curwen, 2001). Finally, the GAIN-Q identifies various life problems the youth may or may not have been exposed to (Dennis, 1998). All noted and additional instruments help to guide staff to make effective intervention, placement, and treatment decisions. The purpose of the VAI is to determine if a juvenile (female or male) residing within a juvenile justice facility may be “at risk” for being victimized or sexually assaulted as well as if the individual is at risk of harming others. If a juvenile is flagged as “at risk” using the VAI, he or she is placed on heightened supervision and/or assigned to a single room, when available. The VAI includes initial demographic questions ($n = 8$), items screening for vulnerability to victimization ($n = 8$), items screening for sexually aggressive behaviors ($n = 2$), and an item screening for violent aggressive behaviors ($n = 1$). An overall vulnerability to victimization score of 9 or more indicates the youth is vulnerable. An overall sexually aggressive behavior score of 4 or more indicates the youth is vulnerable to sexually aggressive behavior as well as violent aggressive behavior. A copy of the VAI can be viewed in Appendix D.

The VAI is administered to juveniles at the time of entry in a detention facility, group home, or youth development center, and when a youth transfers to another site. It is repeated on a

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quarterly basis as well. The manual associated with the VAI states that youth must be screened using the VAI within 72 hours of admission to a Kentucky juvenile justice facility including a detention facility, group home, or youth development center. The VAI is administered by a staff member to a juvenile using a face-to-face interview process. The interviews are conducted in private intake rooms with only the trained staff member and juvenile present. A staff person reads the questions on the instrument and offers explanations and clarification if needed. Youth verbally respond with answers to the survey. Depending on individual particular facility's policies and resources, the VAI is either: 1) stored in its original form, 2) scanned, or 3) recorded electronically once completed. All staff members have access to a manual that details the administration process. In addition, when the instrument was implemented, training and supervision occurred according to the VAI protocol and procedures.

DJJ Facilities. Within Kentucky, there are four types of facilities operated by the state's Department of Juvenile Justice that can serve as placements for juveniles. These include 1) group homes, 2) regional detention centers, 3) youth development centers, and 4) day treatment centers (see Table 1), and the variety of available facilities provides a continuum of options for youth who are detained. Group homes are housed in private residences and are staffed 24 hours a day. Youth Development Centers are campus settings that include private residences and education facilities. Day treatment centers do not have residential facilities as they serve youth by providing a treatment center and non-traditional school. Finally, regional detention centers are housed as secure residential facilities. Detention centers also have staff persons who work as educators within the facilities, as youth do not leave campus for educational opportunities. Day treatment centers are not of interest to this study and will not be included in the analysis, as this research is solely focused on overnight residential programs.

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Table 1

DJJ Facilities in Kentucky

	<i>n</i>	Age range	Description
Group Homes	10	12-17	Community-based residential programs providing structured residence for youth ordered detained
Regional Detention Centers	8	9-18	Secure juvenile holding facilities providing both pre and post-trial residence for detained youth and those awaiting trial
Youth Development Centers	8	14-18	Campus-type residential programs with an on-grounds school, including both secure and staff-secure options
Day Treatment Centers	6	12-17	Non-residential programs providing a variety of day services for juvenile offenders

Note. Information retrieved during 2016 from djj.ky.gov/facilities

While in a group home, youth live together in a home setting and attend local community schools. Although they are monitored in the home by staff 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, it is the least structured and secure of the facilities used in this analysis. Group homes in Kentucky often specialize and serve a specific group of youth, e.g. those of a specific gender, offense type, or age. Specialization allows the treatment to be catered to unique needs of the youth in residence. When considering the use of a risk assessment like the VAI at a group home, certain challenges exist. Youth that are given the currently used VAI and are screened as vulnerable, receive a recommendation for “heightened supervision” and “single room only.” Because group homes operate out of a typical family home, single rooms are only available if it is not operating at full capacity. Alternative room placements are not available since the group home could only have a few rooms for residents to reside in. Therefore, staff members are currently left to subjectively protect the vulnerable youth without adequate placement options.

Any staff using the VAI at regional detention centers across Kentucky also encounter certain challenges. The majority of youth residing in regional detention centers are awaiting trial, thus staff may have little information and very minimal time in which to gather it given that

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youth often reside in the facility for less than 24 hours. Regional detention centers house juveniles of all ages until youth are ordered detained at a detention hearing. DJJ staff working at a regional detention center must screen a youth using the VAI; however, the conclusion once again recommends “heightened supervision” and “single room only.” The challenge here is opposite to the challenge faced by a group home; instead of no heightened supervision single room options, all rooms are secured at the highest level at these facilities. Therefore, it is challenging to provide additional supervision for vulnerable youth, as all youth are adequately supervised given the nature of the facility.

Youth development centers carry similar characteristics as the above-mentioned facilities. These centers are small, treatment oriented, residential settings that contain schools on-campus. The youth development centers are more secure than a group home, but less secure than a regional detention center. The variety facility types in Kentucky makes the job of one single vulnerability assessment instrument very difficult given that each facility has different options for residents regarding security, staffing, discipline, education, and room placement.

Existing screening instruments. Because PREA is a federal law that is carried out by the states, each has unique policies and procedures. To support the evaluation of the VAI used in Kentucky, a cursory search for vulnerability assessment instruments in other countries and states was conducted. The search revealed examples, such as: 1) *Prison Youth Vulnerability Scale* (New Zealand), 2) *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument: Risk to Victimization and/or Sexually Aggressive Behavior/Violent Behavior* (Colorado, USA), and 3) the *Detention Risk Screening* (Oregon, USA). These instruments contain fact-based questions that would align with offense records plus juvenile self-reports as well as other subjective criteria for the interviewer to complete. Many of the responses are numerically coded as evidenced or not evidenced with

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varying ratings for items such as age, perception of risk, and history of sexual or physical victimization. In the majority of these instruments, vulnerability to victimization is scored to include both physical and sexual victimization. Sexually aggressive behavior is scored separately, and violent aggressive behavior is often not scored at all. The data collected on any of these previously mentioned instruments is then used to compute a risk score of being violent, sexually aggressive, or at risk of being victimized.

Evaluation of the VAI. Following one year of practice, the VAI is being evaluated to examine how well it predicts vulnerability to sexual incidents (sexual perpetration or sexual victimization). The project is in response to an RFI released by the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet (KJPSC) to conduct an evaluation of the VAI currently being used within juvenile correctional facilities. The evaluation examines the VAI as a predictive instrument, the content and constructs validity of the instrument based on literature, and makes recommendations for enhancements. This project used a mixed-methods approach with purposeful sampling. Data were collected from the research literature, an electronic survey, cognitive interviews, and statistical analysis. The results of the data collection were used formatively to guide the project team in evaluating the instrument VAI.

Literature Review

A review of literature and other instruments was conducted to validate items in the VAI. An inventory was developed containing literature that addresses juvenile victimization and aggression in correctional facilities to expand the existing instrument and validate items in current use.

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Juvenile Victimization and Aggression

Sexual and physical victimization both fall under the category of “violent crime” (Brown & Bzostek, 2003), which includes simple and aggravated assault, robbery, and sexual assault. Both physical and sexual victimization in youth has been shown to increase the risk of suicide, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Ford, Hartman, Hawke, & Chapman, 2008). Therefore, recent research has empirically addressed this issue in an effort to measure and subsequently reduce the statistics surrounding youth and violence (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005). In the case of the VAI, screening for risk of victimization helps to inform the decision about room placement within a correctional facility, hopefully eliminating, or at least decreasing, incidence of victimization by knowing which youth require more security and support.

Sexual and physical victimization. To satisfy new requirements under PREA, the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducts a number of efforts to review incidents and effects of sexual assault in correctional settings (Beck, 2014). From one such effort surveying youth in state-owned or operated juvenile facilities over a one-year time period, the Bureau has determined that 9.5% of youth in state facilities have experienced sexual victimization in the past 12 months (Beck & Cantor, 2013). According to the National Survey of Youth in Custody (2013), sexual victimization is defined as “any forced sexual activity with another youth (nonconsensual sexual acts and other sexual contacts) and all sexual activity with facility staff” (Beck & Cantor, 2013, p. 7). Physical victimization refers to accounts of physical assault, which includes assault with or without weapon and with or without injury (Finkelhor et al., 2005). Heerde, Scholes-Balog, and Hemphill (2013) also explain that sexual victimization includes the threat of sexual harm in addition to the nonconsensual acts. Sexual victimization is measured using direct experience

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reports from youth (Beck & Cantor, 2013) and analysis of incident reports that speak to this type of victimization (Beck & Harrison, 2007). Sexual assault includes a continuum of unwanted activities that can include an array of offenses from fondling to rape (Campbell, 2008). Offenses may involve physical contact, but non-contact activities including being forced to observe sexual acts or listen to explicit sexual details are also characterized as sexual assault in the juvenile correctional setting. At all Kentucky facilities, staff incident reports are required in conjunction with direct experience reports from youth, even that characterize the activities as consensual. This is because researchers have found that youth reports alone are not sufficient as a number of issues (i.e., trust, code of silence) can have an effect on how often youth report incidents (Beck & Harrison, 2007). Both efforts are still not accurate judgments of incidents that happen in the correctional settings as false allegations and lack of trust continue to prevent precise answers. For adolescents, relatives and acquaintances are most likely to commit the sexual offense (Hanson et al., 2003; Jones, Rossman, Wynn, Dunnuck, & Shwartz, 2003; Muram, Hostetler, Jones, & Speck, 1995; Peipert & Domagalski, 1994; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Stein & Nofziger, 2008; Tjaden & Theonnes, 2006).

Sexual and physical aggression. Screening for sexual aggressors among youth requires an understanding of psychological development, the social environment, and the meaning of behavior in the context of the social environment. In other words, “adolescent behavior, including sexually abusive behavior, is far more influenced by developing biological, emotional, cognitive, and social systems, and the social environment in general, than adult behavior” (Rich, 2011, p. 146).

PREA standards. The National PREA Resource Center supplies materials to guide facilities across the country in appropriate ways to screen for risk of sexual victimization and for

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abusiveness. The guidelines help inform housing, bed, work, education, and program assignments (Hastings, McGarry, & diZerega, 2013). The materials supplied by this center were part of this literature review, and the guidelines specific to juvenile facilities were used to explore current items of the VAI and consider future item development of the revised VAI. Table 2 outlines the criteria and the major questions on the VAI.

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Table 2

Screening for Risk of Sexual Victimization and Abusiveness

Minimum criteria outlined in the PREA Standards that must be included to assess to the risk of victimization	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
(a) Within 72 hours of the resident’s arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a resident’s confinement, the agency shall obtain and use information about each resident’s personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon a resident	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
(b) Such assessments shall be conducted using an objective screening instrument	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
(c) At a minimum, the agency shall attempt to ascertain information about:									
(1) Prior sexual victimization or abusiveness		X			X	X	X		
(2) Any gender nonconforming appearance or manner or identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex, and whether the resident may therefore be vulnerable to sexual abuse									X
(3) Current charges and offense history		X				X	X		X
(4) Age	X								X
(5) Level of emotional and cognitive development			X						X
(6) Physical size and stature									X
(7) Mental illness or mental disabilities									X
(8) Intellectual or developmental disabilities								X	X
(9) Physical disabilities									X
(10) The resident’s own perception of vulnerability			X	X	X				
(11) Any other specific information about individual residents that may indicate heightened needs for supervision, additional safety precautions, or separation from certain other residents.									X

Note. The above 11 criteria come from the juvenile facilities section of the minimum criteria outlined in the PREA Standards that must be included to assess to the risk of victimization (Hastings, McGarry, diZerega, p. 5, 2013).

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Conclusion. The literature review summarized above was used extensively while evaluating the VAI to ensure the items on the VAI were all firmly grounded in the research literature. It was concluded that there was substantial evidence for each item on the VAI, although areas of improvement were noted.

Overview

Data collected for *Phase 1* used an electronic survey, cognitive interviews, and records from previous administration of the VAI along with linked incident reports. The following will detail the sample, method, analysis, and results of each step within with study. Following those explanations, recommendations for a revised VAI will conclude this report.

Study 1: Staff Survey

Although not part of the original evaluation plan, it was determined that a survey was needed to understand 1) who is administering the VAI, 2) how staff are prepared to use the VAI, 3) details about administering the VAI, and 4) perceptions of consistency and subjectivity.

Participants. The sample consisted of 62 DJJ staff who had been administering the VAI. The specific number of staff members who received the survey is unknown as the email was sent to all supervisors at each facility for distribution to staff that could provide insight. Forty-four percent of the respondents who completed the survey indicated that they work in youth development centers followed by detention centers (28.8%) and group homes (20.2%). There were 4 responses (6.1%) indicating “other” with one respondent indicating all of the above, two whom worked in day treatment facilities and one who indicated they were involved in the regional administration of facilities. The majority (95.5%) of respondents indicated that they worked directly with youth and 85.7% reported direct involvement with the VAI. Sixty-four

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percent of responding staff both score and administer the VAI and approximately one-fourth indicated they either reviewed the VAI and/or signed off on the forms.

Materials. A 38-item electronic survey was developed by the UK Research Team in collaboration with the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (CJSAC) Liaison. The purpose of this instrument was to assess the DJJ staff member's administration process and gain information on the current opinions and areas of improvement of the VAI. Specifically, selected response and open-ended questions within the survey captured information about the role(s) of a staff member, the level of training received, environment of administration, perceptions of consistency, and how VAI results are used. The survey was developed and managed within Qualtrics.

Procedure. The CJSAC Liaison sent an e-mail to participants inviting them to complete the survey. The e-mail, detailing the purpose of the survey, was sent to all facilities in Kentucky. Consenting participants could then select an electronic link, which would allow them to complete the instrument anonymously. A copy of the survey instrument is available in Appendix A.

Results and Discussion. Although multiple staff administer the VAI, the majority (90.6%) of respondents report that staff receive training for administering and scoring the VAI. Table 3 displays the frequency of responses for the survey item "How many people are trained at your facility to administer the VAI?" Most frequently, respondents declined to answer this item. The most frequent answer (16.2%) identified that three individuals were trained at their facilities with a range from 1 to 12 administer the VAI.

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Table 3

Number of Staff Trained at Facility to Administer the VAI (N = 68)

	<i>f</i>	%
No response	19	27.9
1	1	1.5
2	8	11.8
3	11	16.2
4	7	10.3
5	4	5.9
6	5	7.4
7	3	4.4
8	2	2.9
9	2	2.9
10	1	1.5
11	2	2.9
12	3	4.4

The majority of respondents indicated that they received training for how to administer and score the VAI; however, the method and length of training reported varied tremendously across responses (see all verbatim responses in Appendix B). Examples of training included: training provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice ($n = 3$), through reading directions ($n = 3$), or trained by superintendent ($n = 2$). Respondents also indicated the length of training varied from 5-10 minutes ($n = 1$) to 2 days ($n = 3$). Table 4 shows the frequency of response on length of training for the VAI based on 21 respondents' feedback.

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Table 4

Length of Training for Administering the VAI

Length of training	<i>f</i>
2 days	3
1 day	3
8 hours	2
2 hours	1
1-2 hours	2
1 hour	3
30 minutes	3
20 minutes	2
5-10 minutes	1

Forty-nine staff described the setting in which the VAI is administered or conducted and reported the number of people involved during administration. Fifty-one percent indicated that the administration of the VAI takes place in the counselor's office and that it is private (79.6%) meaning that just the youth and counselor are present. Ten percent ($n = 5$) mentioned that additional staff members are present during the interview. Two respondents indicated there were two people in the room and one mentioned that it was a video monitored room. Respondents were first asked if the same person always administers the VAI and then asked if the same person always scores the VAI. For both questions, approximately 25% of respondents report that the same person administers and scores the VAI.

The length of time reported for administering the VAI varied greatly. Responses were open ended and ranged from 5 minutes to an hour. Table 5 shows that, according to most respondents, the VAI takes a minimal amount of time to administer. For most (74%), data collection is completed within 10 to 30 minutes. Nearly a quarter of respondents described that

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the VAI is usually administered in less than 10 minutes. Many respondents also qualified the number by indicating the length depends upon the youth and the level of discussion.

Table 5

Amount of Time Needed to Administer the VAI (N = 42)

Minutes	<i>f</i>	%
0-9	12	24
10-20	26	52
20-30	11	22
60	1	2

According to most respondents (77.8%), most facilities allow for the VAI administrator to ask the youth follow-up questions in order to obtain additional relevant information. However, 22.2% reported that questions other than what are included on the VAI are not allowed. Additionally, respondents were asked if administrators had prior access to the juvenile's file prior to completing the VAI. The majority of respondents (92.6%) report that administrators had prior access to file information before completing the VAI.

Some respondents described the types of follow-up questions allowed through open-ended responses. The majority of the responses indicated that the follow-up questions were asked to gain further details and seek clarification primarily for the reporting of abuse. Below are some respondent's descriptions of what they ask in follow-up questions:

After the questions are asked/answered-----How does that make you feel? Is there something you left out or something else you wish to discuss/talk about? Would you care to explain that, etc.? [a lot depends on the resident and his/her answers as to whether you pursue additional information. We are not to judge---just gain helpful information.] (Staff member, 2015)

Follow up questions are asked if a resident discloses previous victimization to ensure that all reporting requirements have been met. (Staff member, 2015)

If there is any indication of abuse we attempt to clarify so we can do mandatory reporting to agencies. (Staff member, 2015)

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The majority of respondents (90.4%) confirmed that the terminology used in the VAI is explained to youth during administration and that this occurs before, during, and after administration. The person administering the VAI will respond to questions, notice if youth do not seem to understand, or use the examples contained in the administration guide.

Gathering permission to administer the VAI varies. Some respondents reported they get verbal permission, while others report that it is required (and therefore no permission is required). Only one respondent reported that s/he gains permission through a Youth Acknowledgement of PREA Education and Documentation process. The majority of responses indicate that permission is granted verbally, however, two responses indicate they do not ask permission. Some verbatim responses are below:

We do NOT ask permission. We simply explain that this is part of the process of coming to Detention. (We have NEVER had any resident refuse to answer the questions.) How truthful they are is sometimes in question. (Staff member, 2015).
I don't understand this question. All youth in the facility are required to be assessed within 48 hours. (Staff member, 2015).

Permission is gathered verbally and the documented through a Youth Acknowledgement of PREA Education and Documentation. (Staff member, 2015).

Staff were asked if youth refuse to complete the interview. Of the 52 responses, 49 (94%) reported that youth do not refuse. One indicated that they could choose, one said "Yes, but only rarely" and one indicated "yes, the most refused question at this time appear to be question 9 regarding sexual orientation."

Overall, 100% of respondents indicate that staff appear to understand the terminology on the VAI. Additionally, staff were asked if the wording of the VAI was unclear. One Hundred percent indicated that it was not unclear; however four responses qualified this by stating that question 7, which asks about a violent offense, is not specific enough. Youth may not

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understand how to answer. One response indicated “The youth usually don't have any knowledge about questioning, transsexual, or intersex in regards to question #9.” An additional verbatim staff explanation

Yes, the phrase "violent offense" is vague and a short list of examples (murder, attempted murder, assault 1st) would help clarify the intent of the question without the person administering the tool to always check the scoring guide to understand what is or is not a violent offense. The wording of questions 5b is vague and muddles the intent of the question. As the administrator I understand we are asking the youth if they have been sexually assaulted/abused however, the question also lends itself to youth answering yes simply because they engaged in sex they later regretted (due to intoxication or other factors) and could skew the scoring mechanism. (Staff member, 2015)

There is conflicting feedback regarding consistency and objectivity. The majority of respondents (75.5%) reported that the VAI is not scored consistently by the same individual, yet most respondents (77.1%) describe the questions of the VAI as objective. Those indicating the instrument is subjective reported that the assessment is based on feelings, visual opinions, and point of view of the person administering or the youth. It was also mentioned that “Youth give you the information they want you to have” and “Youth have different definitions of “attack” and “abuse”, etc.”

Staff rated the consistency among staff members that use the VAI (Table 6). The majority of staff indicated that use of the VAI among staff was somewhat or very consistent.

Table 6

Perception of Consistency Among Staff Members that Use the VAI

	<i>f</i>	%
Very inconsistent	5	9.4
Somewhat inconsistent	3	5.7
Somewhat consistent	10	18.9
Very consistent	35	66.0

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To further understand perceptions of consistency, staff were asked if they felt there may be inconsistencies between how the VAI was administered and if so, how they thought this could be improved. Some suggestions for improvement included having round table discussions, conducting combined training, limiting to a small number of staff, and ensuring consistent explanations.

By having roundtable discussions among the participants in the screening process (Staff member, 2015).

Conduct a combined training for those who administer the VAI. (Staff member, 2015).

I feel that there could be improvements in the administration just purely in the manner in which a person interviews, the time he or she takes to look and interact with a youth and see their responses. Their body language tells a lot that is unspoken. (Staff member, 2015).

Staff were asked how long, after the VAI is administered, is the typical period between the time the juvenile is assessed and he or she is placed? All responses indicated that youth are placed within 24 hours, if not immediately. Other factors that staff considered when making placement decisions are: known relationships with others (e.g., co-defendants placed in separate housing), history, numbers of youth currently at the facility, charge and court orders.

When asked how age factors into placement decisions, some indicated that their facility has an age range so it is not a factor. Others indicated that they do not put younger youth with older youth and that the younger youth can be put with females. Most staff indicated that they try to keep similar aged youth together.

The youth's self-reported mental health history plays a role in the placement decision. For many it provides a starting point and is often followed up on. For others it plays a large role and they can be assigned to a special unit. A few indicated it does not play a role, because they do not discriminate. Some verbatim quotes are below.

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We have units specially designed for youth with mental health problems and they are placed at our facility by Classification. (Staff member, 2015)

Youth with a history of self-harm must be monitored very closely. It may determine where they sleep. (Staff member, 2015)

Very much, however we do have to try and verify certain information. (Staff member, 2015)

Staff were asked if others are involved in placement decisions. Of the 51 staff responses 21 (41.18%) indicated no one else is involved with the placement decisions. The remaining responses reported that the Superintendent, the Youth Service Program Supervisor (YSPS), or the treatment team have the final say.

To further understand placement decisions, staff were asked what role the VAI plays in deciding where to place an individual. In the facilities where there are options (e.g., more than just single rooms) almost all respondents indicated the VAI helps them determine bedding arrangements, supervision, and cell or wing placement. One person reported youth are placed before the VAI is administered and one reported they have an open dorm style living arrangement. Some verbatim staff quotes are below:

Any youth that has scored high in any given area would be placed on close supervision, but continues to remain with the group that they arrive with. (Staff member, 2015)

If they have been charged with a violent charge or a sexual charge they are in a single cell. If they are a sex offender they can't be housed with girls if it is a guy. If they score vulnerable they will have a single cell. (No roommate) (Staff member, 2015)

It assists in the level of supervision needed with a youth. It will help to determine placement of a youth's sleeping arrangements in a bedroom. How much direct supervision is needed by staff. This along with charges of the youth will determine if the youth needs to remain in direct visual of staff in the bedroom during their stay at the facility. (Staff member, 2015)

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When a facility has the ability to separate youth, youth are primarily separated by gender, then age. Severity of charges, prior history, maturity level of youth, and number in the group is also considered.

Staff were asked if there is interaction between genders when the youth are separated by gender. There were 46 responses and the majority (65.2%) reported most facilities do not allow for males and females to interact with each other while residing at the facilities.

Staff were also asked how placement decisions are made when youth expresses gender non-conformity. The majority of the 50 responses indicate it does not affect placement while some report that if the youth seems vulnerable, he or she would be placed in a non-threatening unit or placed with the gender with which they identify. Many responded that it has never been an issue. The responses are very similar to the question about how placement decisions are made when a youth identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. Some verbatim responses are below:

Since we do not allow interaction between youth, other than verbal during leisure, they would be treated the same as any other youth. (Staff member, 2015)

All girls go to the same place. The boys have a bit more room to choose what is most comfortable if their charge permits. (Staff member, 2015)

If the resident appears vulnerable, he/she would be placed in the least threatening unit. (Staff member, 2015)

It is discussed between all parties---Counselors, YSPS, Supervisors, Administrators, Intake staff, etc. Still, it is for the most part, males with males and females with females. Close supervision takes place to protect all parties and keep everyone safe secure and free from harassment. Special placement requests made by a resident are also taken into serious consideration. (Staff member, 2015)

Only half of the responses indicate that youth are housed differently if they have had a violent (sexual) offense.

Summary of study 1. Sixty-seven staff members from the Department of Juvenile Justice provided information on the VAI. There are many different people

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administering and scoring the VAI in each facility. While the majority of staff reports that training is provided for those who administer the VAI, there is no consistency in how the training is delivered or how long that training lasts. This indicates an area of improvement. There is conflicting feedback regarding consistency and objectivity. The majority of respondents (75.5%) reported that the same individual does not score the VAI consistently, yet most respondents (77.1%) describe the questions of the VAI as objective. A good, objective instrument should result in consistent scoring. Staff suggested that additional training would help. Placement decisions are limited by physical space (e.g., there are no single rooms at all). When it is possible, females are separated from males, but nobody reported having to accommodate someone who identifies as lesbian or gay. General suggestions made by staff include clarification of the wording on the instrument and that the form be made electronic.

Study 2: Cognitive interviews

In an attempt to achieve conceptual equivalence of the items on the VAI, the research team conducted cognitive interviews on the original VAI. A cognitive interview is “a method that does allow for in-depth analysis of individual items...and tests the validity of verbal reports of the respondents’ thought process” (Desimone & LeFloch, 2004, p. 6; Willis & Boeije, 2013). The use of cognitive interviews in addition to a well-designed survey, improves the validity of the information gathered (Willis & Boeije, 2013) and can help the instrument designer understand shared conflicted understanding of the constructs central to the study (Desimone & LeFloch, 2004). When used for the VAI, the results helped to determine if staff from different facilities were interpreting the items reliably, conducting the interview accurately, and evaluating the youth in a consistent manner. Because youth who respond to the VAI are within a sensitive

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and protected population, cognitive interview participants were staff members at DJJ facilities that administer the VAI interview. The team elicited DJJ staff members to participate in these interviews by email invitations provided by the CJSAC Liaison. The major process steps of the cognitive interviewing process include training of the interviewee, participant recruitment, interviews, and analysis of results. More specifically, the cognitive interviews answered the following research questions:

1. How do staff members interpret the items and response options?
2. Are the items clearly worded and specific enough to produce reliable and valid information?
3. Do the items and response choices accurately represent youths' behaviors and vulnerabilities when within a DJJ facility?

Participants. To be eligible for a cognitive interview, staff members were current DJJ staff members who actively administered the VAI to youth. Participants were purposively drawn from all three types of DJJ facilities including group homes, youth development centers, and detention centers. A description of the participants is in Table 7.

Table 7
Description of Participants for Cognitive Interviews (N = 10)

Demographic Variable	<i>f</i>
Gender	
Female	3
Male	7
Position	
Treatment Counselor/Social Worker	5
Superintendent	5

The cognitive interviews were conducted on the original VAI. A total of 10 staff members were recruited through a purposeful sampling process whereby the CJSAC Liaison

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nominated known staff members that would be willing to discuss improvements on the VAI (to ensure representation from each type of center). The mean administration time was 55 minutes (range 41-62 minutes). One-on-one interviews were used as much as possible, although some staff members opted to be interviewed at the same time as another same-facility staff member. Audio recording was used to eliminate the need to take notes during the interview, and all audio recordings were evaluated the same day of the interview.

Method. The cognitive interviewing process included introductory verbal scripts on the purpose of the interview, instructions on how to respond, and relevant scripted probes for each item (Adair et al., 2011). See Appendix C. Two cognitive interviewing techniques were used: verbal probing techniques and “think-aloud interview” (Willis, 1999). A member of the Evaluation Team was trained to conduct cognitive interview techniques, consistent with the recommendations given by Willis (1999) and the American Statistical Association (1997). Verbal probing techniques, specifically concurrent probing, is the more widely accepted method of cognitive interview and involves asking the respondent to elaborate on certain answers and responses that are of interest to the team immediately following the individual response (Adair et al., 2011; Willis, 1999). The “think-aloud interview” is conducted by explicitly instructing the participants to talk through their thought process as they read through the instrument in its’ current form (American Statistical Association, 1997; Desimone & LeFloch, 2004; Willis, 1999). Probes were also designed to elicit responses on how the staff members viewed the item and how the youth viewed the item. While the think-aloud process goes on, the interviewer interjects very little. When more information is needed, a concurrent probe is used. For example:

INTERVIEWER (reading VAI question to be tested): Have you ever been arrested for a violent offense?

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PARTICIPANT: This is very unclear. Even youth ask us, is this considered a violent offense?

INTERVIEWER: Can you elaborate on what is unclear?

PARTICIPANT: Violent offense can mean so many things to our youth or to the staff here. Staff can see certain things as violent. Lots of times youth don't think they have done anything violent, when they really have! I always have to look at the manual when I am answering this question, and even then, I find it unclear.

Here, the interviewer gained valuable information by asking the respondent to begin by "thinking aloud, and then probed with a concurrent probe to find out more about the confusion on the item. The interviewer learned about the clarity of this item on the VAI and took notes from the audio recording to clarify this item on future revisions of the VAI.

Analysis. Following the interviews, the team transcribed the sessions from voice recordings and identified key issues from the dialogues (Ouimet, Bunnage, Carini, Kuh, & Kennedy, 2004). The transcriptions were studied and analyzed to identify any aspects of survey design and question construction that staff indicated could be potentially problematic (Adair et al., 2011; Ouimet et al., 2004). Results were summarized and assessed across all DJJ locations to determine similarities, discrepancies, and frequencies of types of responses (Adair et al., 2011). The results were shared with the evaluation team in a separate meeting. Results were cross-referenced with the psychometric properties of the VAI, paying particular attention to items that were not normally distributed or that had lower than expected reliabilities or intercorrelations (Ouimet et al., 2004).

Results and Discussion. After concluding cognitive interviews, specific items on the VAI were determined to require adaptation or deletion for the following reasons: 1) easy

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endorsement, 2) multiple meanings, 3) ambiguity, 4) social desirability, 5) redundancy, and 6) age appropriateness. Specifically, the interviews provided information in the following areas after finding consistency among respondents: (a) item clarity, (b) ease of completion, and (c) accuracy of evidence. Table 8 contains a summary of these item categories.

Table 8

Types of Problems Reflected in VAI

Problem Type	Definition	Example Input
<u>Item Clarity</u>		
Wording or terminology	Comments about wording that is confusing, offensive, too complicated for juvenile	“How does the term sexual experience differ from being asked about being attacked or abused?”
Complexity of item	Comments about the need to simplify the item	“This item can be tricky/confusing because youth distinguish a difference between home, new school, group home – Maybe we should break this down.”
Subjective item	Comments about the subjectivity of the item	“There is a disparity between what we think is violent and what kids think is violent.”
<u>Accuracy of Evidence</u>		
Issue with records/evidence	Comments about a lack of evidence to support this item, missing evidence, or discrepancies	“This is a concern because we don’t have access to records and kids often are not honest.”
<u>Ease of Completion</u>		
Redundancy	Comments about item redundancy	“What is difference between slow/dull and question 8 – why are we asking twice?”
More information needed	Comments about additional information needed to clarify that item	“When I’m doing this question I give a disclaimer that is not written in the assessment and I apologize for asking sensitive questions.”

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New or revised items (see Table 9) will be written to provide maximal individual differences and the instrument and will then reflect greater precision and specificity eliminating opportunities for error during administration and evaluation. The cognitive interview process conceded valuable information for ways to improve the validity of the instrument's items by identifying response errors, adding missing information, and providing additional material when needed. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument were noted during transcription and analysis (Desimone & LeFloch, 2004).

Table 9

Selected Item Wording Revisions to the VAI

Initial Wording	Revised Wording
Are you Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, Transsexual, Questioning/Queer or Intersex?	Do you think of yourself as: Lesbian/gay, Straight/heterosexual, transgender, Bisexual, asexual/no sexual orientation, Don't know, Other (specify): _____
Have you ever been arrested for a violent offense?	Have you ever been arrested for murder, assault, robbery, or another offense where someone was hurt?
Lead in with: How do you feel being in a facility with so many other juvenile justice youth?	At this facility, do you feel you will be at risk to attacks or abuse from other youth?
Have you ever initiated behavior that would be considered sexually aggressive?	Item broken down into questions such as: Do you think that you would use force to have sexual relations under certain circumstances?

Limitations. Because only one team member conducted the cognitive interviews, intercoder agreement was not an issue for this study. The team made every effort to obtain a sample representative of the population that uses the VAI and had multiple respondents from each category of DJJ facility. However, without randomization, the sample used for the

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interviews means that the results are not generalizable to a particular population of DJJ staff members (Desimone & LeFloch, 2005). However, positively, the information gained from these interviews was consistent with the findings from Study 1. Open-ended responses gained from cognitive interviews in conjunction with quantitative responses from the e-survey allowed for clear recommendations to be made for future revisions of this instrument.

Study 3: Statewide Data Collection

Method. To determine how well the VAI predicts vulnerability to victimization or sexual violence and physically assaultive behaviors, individual VAI forms were matched with DJJ incident reports (IR) completed since the inception of the instrument in 2013. A description of the data collected is summarized in Table 9. Data was requested by the CJSAC Liaison and sent to a secure location in Frankfort. Members of the UK Research team commuted to Frankfort to input data, including scores associated with the VAI as well as the scores associated with incident reports (to provide predictive analysis). Baseline records on the VAI were collected and interpreted by the research team in order to analyze and make conclusions about the current instrument. The majority of this information was analyzed descriptively due to missing data.

Table 10

Description of Data (N = 1,755)

	<i>n</i>	%
Complete VAI	1,364	77.7
Complete IR	309	79.0
Complete VAI with at least one IR	140	8.0
Duplicate cases	662	37.7
Incomplete cases	81	4.6

Note. IR = incident report.

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Table 10 contains a description of the collected VAI and IR data broken down by the facility type. Due to time restrictions, data was collected from a random selection of facilities represented in Table 11, including group homes ($n = 3$), juvenile detention centers ($n = 1$), and youth development centers ($n = 3$). Only one juvenile detention center was used due to the large size of the facility in comparison to the other types of facilities. Effort was made to ensure that the sample contained a diverse selection of facilities.

Table 11

Number of Youth by Type of Facility (N = 1,755)

Type of facility	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Group Home	118	6.7
Regional Juvenile Detention Centers	855	48.7
Youth Development Centers	780	44.4
Missing	2	0.1

Data from incident reports were recorded and included in the data entry if the incident was a sexual or physical assault or report of a sexual or physical victimization consistent with the standards included under PREA. PREA “encompasses acts in which an offender sexually offends against another inmate without consent or a staff member is involved sexually with an inmate with or without his or her consent” (Weber, O’Keefe, & Steers, 2009, p. 8). Incidents of sexual assault and rape were included along with sexual misconduct activities such as sex, masturbation, or written statements sexual in nature (Weber, et al., 2009). The UK research team used interrater reliability to ensure all research members included incidents of similar nature.

Analysis and Results. Data were analyzed descriptively to make conclusions about the current administration of the VAI and locate potential areas of improvement. Data verification

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was possible on a small percentage of the incident reports and VAIs because the UK research team noted identical forms on approximately 15% of the records as well as missing data on approximately 5% of the records. Data verification was only possible qualitatively because it was not possible to code those who administered the VAI or incident reports. Additionally, because few sexual victimization incidents are reported by DJJ facilities, the lack of variability in incidents makes the instrument less reliable at predicting events.

The UK research team found inconsistencies in how incidents are reported across the facilities operating within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Without a standardized method of reporting incidents, results should be interpreted with caution. Incident reports were not consistently and appropriately categorized, defined, and detailed. The UK research team did not have access to staff that made the report, so additional details and confirmation of the incidents was not possible. Incident facts could not always be established.

Recommendations and Limitations

Results from the literature as well as the surveys and interviews with DJJ personnel were synthesized and will be incorporated into a revised VAI instrument. This instrument will be known as the *VSPA-S: Victimization and Sexual/Physical Aggression Screener*. The term “screener” will be adopted to signify the importance of this instrument as only a screening tool, and not an analysis instrument. The new instrument will attempt to correct confusing wording, provide clear scoring, and address problems discovered in the evaluation process. In addition, options for interventions will be provided in order to ensure each facility is not left to subjectively define what should be done for a vulnerable youth. The new instrument will undergo pilot testing and DJJ staff will be consulted on the suggested revisions. In addition to the

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suggested changes for a pilot administration, the evaluation team recommended that an online version of the instrument be developed to improve consistency of data derived from the VSPA-S.

The original purpose of this phase of the project was to conduct an evaluation of the VAI. This purpose has been successful; however, it is important to note the limitations faced by the UK research team throughout the project. Missing data has been identified as the most influential limitation of this study. The UK research team noticed a trend of people filling out the VAI incorrectly, which causes a potential for incorrect conclusions and score interpretations to be made (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014). The research team recommends the improvement of training opportunities to prevent this in the future. The team further recommends that each staff member be assigned a unique ID, which will aid in future tracking and evaluation. In addition, considerable threats to validity were identified throughout the data collection process. These threats, which are listed in Table 12, included a lack of clarity in test instructions, item complexities unrelated to the construct, and test response expectations (AERA Standards*).

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Table 12

Threats to Construct-Irrelevant Variance in Test Scores

Type of Threat	Explanation of the Threat	Example of the Threat	Strategies to improve
Test Content	Test content that muddles the measurement of the target construct and differentially favors individuals from some groups over others	Items that include content that is offensive or emotionally disturbing to certain demographics over others	Independent and diverse cognitive interviews
Test Context	Aspects of the test or testing environment that affects performance of the youth	Lack of clarity and consistency in instructions, inconsistent administration, uncomfortable environment	Standardize administration with training, review, and tracking of staff
Test Response	Test items elicit incorrect response other than those intended	Items can be solved without a youth interview	Standardize administration with training, review, and tracking of staff
Opportunity to Learn	Extent to which individuals have had exposure to instruction or knowledge that affords them the opportunity to learn how to respond to the items	Individuals that have been in DJJ facilities may have prior opportunities to take the VAI	This is beyond the control of the research team

Note. As based on the AERA 2014 standards

Additional information. In addition, the VSPA-S should be used in conjunction with other available sources of information in order to provide youth with the highest quality screen. As the VAI is a self-report instrument, other sources of information are required. This is because self-report instruments rely on honest answers from participants and introspective ability, and

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responses from these instruments often carry artifacts that include acquiescent responding and social desirability. The VSPA-S is conducted with other tools used at the time of intake; however, and this intake should also include an analysis of the individual's history as well as any records of previous experiences that the youth has had in DJJ facilities. Throughout cognitive interviews, it was expressed to the UK research team that this process is inconsistent and unreliable as DJJ staff does not always have access to accurate records. Without these records, conclusions about the youth's vulnerability cannot be made with confidence given that responses from youth cannot be positively relied upon. It is the recommendation of the UK Research Team that this data recording process be enhanced and perfected in order to ensure scores from the VSPA-S are precise.

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Appendix A

DJJ Staff E-survey

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

The purpose of this project is to conduct an evaluation of the Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI) that is currently used within juvenile correctional facilities. The VAI assesses the vulnerability to sexual or physical victimization and perpetration in imprisoned adolescents or youth sentenced or remanded to placement in Kentucky facilities. The VAI provides guidance to staff in the room placement (i.e., single room vs. group room) of adolescents who may be at risk of sexual or violent victimization or who may be at risk of perpetrating such acts. This project is being conducted within the Department of Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology at the University of Kentucky and under the request of the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet (KJPSC).

The proposed project is designed to provide services to evaluate, validate, and enhance evidence of the Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI) used by KJPSC.

In order to participate in this project, your informed consent is required. You are being asked whether or not you would like to participate in this study. If you would like to participate in the study, and agree with the statements below, your completion of the questionnaire signifies your consent. You may change your mind at any time and not complete the questionnaire, without penalty, even after starting the questionnaire. I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My confidentiality will be protected. My name will be kept confidential. There will be no way to connect me to my online questionnaire.
3. There are no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of my participation in this project.
4. My participation involves reading an online questionnaire and answering those questions by selecting my answer. It is estimated that it will take 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
5. About 20 to 30 KJPSC staff members will be asked to complete this questionnaire.
6. This research will offer valuable information to the research team in the procedures that currently exist surrounding the VAI and will guide improvements to the instrument.
7. I am 21 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this project have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the project realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the questionnaire process. Submitting the questionnaire indicates my consent to participate.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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EVALUATION OF THE VAI

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Remember, your opinions are anonymous and will help to improve the next version of the VAI. Feel free to refer to the PDF copy of the VAI that was attached to the e-mail you received to answer specific questions or make

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additional comments. If the answer does not apply to you, please type "N.A." in the box. We appreciate your time and thoughtful answers.

- 1) What type of facility do you work at?
 - a) Detention Center (1)
 - b) Youth Development Center (2)
 - c) Group Home (3)
 - d) Other; Please list your facility type in the box below. (4) _____

- 2) Do you have direct contact with youth?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)

- 3) Are you directly involved in anything to do with the VAI?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)

- 4) What is your role with the VAI?
 - a) I administer the VAI. (1)
 - b) I score the VAI. (2)
 - c) I score and administer the VAI. (3)
 - d) Other; Please describe your role in the box below. (4) _____

- 5) At your facility, does the same person always administer the VAI?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)

- 6) At your facility, does the same person always score the VAI?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)

- 7) Are individuals trained to score and administer the VAI?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)

- 8) How many people are trained at your facility to administer the VAI?

- 9) How does one become qualified/trained to administer the VAI? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."

- 10) If there is training, how long does this training last? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."

- 11) Do staff appear to understand terminology on the VAI? If not, please type "no" and explain.

- 12) Is any of the wording on the VAI unclear? If so, please explain. If not, please type "no."

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- 13) At the time of VAI administration, have administrators had prior access to information regarding the youth? (e.g. case history, prior records)
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)
- 14) Describe, in detail, the setting in which the VAI is administered or conducted, including the number of people in the room: If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 15) How is data collected for the VAI?
 - a) Data is collected on a paper copy of the VAI. (1)
 - b) Data is collected on an electronic copy of the VAI. (2)
 - c) Data is first collected on a paper copy, and later transferred to an electronic copy. (3)
 - d) Other; Please explain. (4) _____
- 16) How long does the VAI take to administer? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 17) Are follow-up questions permitted to allow you to gain additional information from youth?
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)
- 18) Please describe what types of questions are asked to gain additional information from youth.
- 19) Is the terminology used in the VAI explained to youth during administration? (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual harassment, etc.)
 - a) Yes (1)
 - b) No (2)
- 20) When and how is the terminology explained to youth? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 21) How is permission gathered for those individuals who are assessed using the VAI? (i.e., verbal, written) If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 22) Do youth refuse to complete the interview? If yes, please explain. If no, please type "no."
- 23) Are there any other factors considered when making placement decisions? If not, please type "no."
- 24) How does an individual's age factor into placement decisions? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 25) How much does a juvenile's self-reported mental health history typically impact his or her placement decision? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."

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- 26) Once placed in a facility, how are youth separated (by age, gender, etc.)? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 27) If youth are separated by gender, are there opportunities for interactions between genders?
a) Yes (1)
b) No (2)
- 28) How are placement decisions made in situations where youth expresses gender non-conformity? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 29) How are placement decisions made when a youth identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/ queer, or intersex? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 30) Are youth housed differently if they have had a violent (sexual) offense?
a) Yes (1)
b) No (2)
- 31) If you could change one thing about the VAI to improve the process, what would it be?
- 32) Is there anything else you would like to share about the process for completing the VAI? If so, please use the space below to share your thoughts and suggestions.
- 33) Do you think that the questions on the VAI are more subjective or objective?
a) Subjective (based on opinions) (1)
b) Objective (based on facts) (2)
- 34) Since you answered "subjective," please briefly explain your answer.
- 35) To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate the consistency among staff members that use the VAI?
a) Very inconsistent (1)
b) Somewhat inconsistent (2)
c) Somewhat consistent (3)
d) Very consistent (4)
- 36) Do you feel there may be inconsistencies between how the VAI is administered and if so, how do you think those could be improved? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 37) Are there others involved in making the placement decision? If not, please type "no."
- 38) What role does the VAI result play in deciding where to place an individual? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."
- 39) After the VAI is administered, how long is the typical period between the time the juvenile is assessed and when he or she is placed? If this question does not apply to you, write "N.A."

Appendix B

Sample Verbatim Responses from E-Survey

Sample items and verbatim responses from STB

Please describe what types of questions are asked to gain additional information from youth.

- *“After the questions are asked/answered-----How does that make you feel? Is there something you left out or something else you wish to discuss/talk about? Would you care to explain that, etc.? (a lot depends on the resident and his/her answers as to whether you pursue additional information. We are not to judge---just gain helpful information.)”*
- *“If you feel at risk to attacks, why or what particularly scares you? Is there someone that you know is here that threatens you? If you've been attacked or abused, was this attack domestic or a fight at school, in the neighborhood”*

Describe, in detail, the setting in which the VAI is administered or conducted

- *“The counselor or YSPS meets with the resident privately in an office area to complete the PREA questionnaire. The results are scored and passed up the supervisory chain for review, modification or approval with signature and date of the Superintendent.”*
- *“The assessment is usually administered in a counselor's office, with only the counselor and youth present.”*
- *“Two people in the room, and the setting is in my office, in private.”*
- *“Assessments are conducting in Intake before the resident joins general population. The resident is usually in an individual cell talking individually with the counselor. Other staff may be present in intake, but not in the cell during the assessment.”*

How to improve consistency.

- *“No. Staff delivers information correctly; the V.A.I. is an inaccurate measurable tool.”*
- *“Possibly ensuring that all administrators explain terms and questions the same way.”*
- *“The VAI is administered the same way in our facility so there are very little inconsistencies.”*
- *“Currently the only inconsistency I experience is the interoperation of what constitutes a violent offense. Even though the list of offense is lined out in the scoring guide many staff still consider an assault 4th to be a violent offense but will not consider robbery 1st to be violent.”*

How does one become qualified to administer the VAI?

- *“By reading the directions”*
 - *“I am not certain, however I believe we went to conference style training.”*
 - *“Through online instructions, discussion and training.”*
 - *“We attended a training when DJJ first started using the VAI”*
 - *“Attend PREA TOT Training - Vulnerability Assessment Training”*
 - *“An individual becomes qualified to administer the VAI by reviewing the VAI scoring guide and by being walked through several in person administrations of the tool.”*
-

Appendix C

Cognitive Interview Protocol

The following describes the cognitive interview protocol that will be used in this study.

Note: cognitive interviews will be done on both the existing form and the revised form.

The protocol is based on protocols suggested by the following references:

Beatty, P. C. & Willis, G. B. (2007). Research synthesis: The practice of cognitive interviewing. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71(2), 287-311.

Shafer, K. & Lohse, B. How to conduct a cognitive interview: A nutrition education example. *IFAFS Competitive Grants Program/USDA, Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station, and NC219*.

Willis, G. & Boeije, H. (2014). Reflections on the cognitive interviewing reporting framework. *Methodology*, 9(3), 123-128. doi: 10.1027/1614-2241/a000074.

1-2 Days Prior to Conducting the Cognitive Interview

1. Assemble the following materials:
 - a. Pens
 - b. Consent Forms
 - c. Record Forms
 - d. Copy of the *Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI)*
2. Call or e-mail the interviewee to remind him/her of the cognitive interview. Tell him/her to allow 45 minutes to complete the cognitive interview.
3. Purchase or organize refreshments for the interviewees during the interview.

Day of the Cognitive Interview

1. Arrive 30 minutes early to set up materials and familiarize yourself with the interview location.
2. Set up the table and the chairs so the two chairs are perpendicular to one another to facilitate conversation.
3. Set up refreshments.

Interview Begins

1. Introduce yourself. Thank the interviewee for coming and show him/her where to sit.
2. Establish rapport by explaining who you are and what you are doing.

“The Vulnerability Assessment Instrument (VAI) assesses the vulnerability to sexual or physical victimization and perpetration in confined adolescents or youth sentenced or remanded to placement in Kentucky’s juvenile justice facilities. One goal of this study is to refine the scale through the utilization of cognitive interviews among staff members. What we learn from today’s discussion will help the research team when editing the instrument for future data collection efforts. We will treat all answers as confidential. You will be given a random ID and your name will not be associated with your responses in any reports that we write. Do you have any questions about the study?”
3. Record the start time.
4. Gain consent verbally after reading the form aloud to the interviewee and answering any questions.
5. Ask the participant to sign the form, and add your signature as well.

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6. Remind the interviewee that there are no wrong answers and that their responses will be anonymous.
7. Explain the interview procedure to the interviewee.
“We will go through each item one by one. We will look at each question together and I will ask you to elaborate on any concerns, improvements, or suggestions that you have surrounding that item.”
8. The interviewers will then go through each item and probe with only questions of understanding.
9. Some follow-up questions may include the following probes:
 - a. “The researcher was really trying to ask _____ when they wrote that question. How might they better word the question that would make more sense?”
 - b. “Can you repeat the item in your own words? (To test how well the staff comprehends the item).”
 - c. “How do youth perceive this item? (To test how well the youth comprehends the item).”
 - d. “What, to you, is a ____?” (To test comprehension of a particular item)
 - e. “How sure are you that you could elicit a response from a youth for this item?” (To determine the youth’s ability to answer the item as well as the probability of answering the item).
 - f. “How hard is this item for youth to answer?” (To determine level of difficulty and likelihood of estimation/guessing).
 - g. “What extra information do you provide youth if they are confused?”

Throughout the Cognitive Interview

1. Provide non-verbal reinforcement to let the interviewee know you are listening.
2. Encourage specifics about what the interviewee is thinking such as. “Tell me what you mean by that.”
3. Record all verbal and non-verbal actions if possible using the recording form below.
4. Use probes throughout the interview to gain more information.

Appendix D

Original VAI



JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY CABINET
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Vulnerability Assessment Instrument:
Sexual Assault Victim/Assailant Profile Checklist

Juvenile's Name: _____
 DJJ Number: _____
 DOB: ___/___/___ Sex: _____ Race: _____
 Date of Referral: ___/___/___ Date of Screen: ___/___/___
 Facility: _____

Results:		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial
Yes	No	<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vulnerability Victimization
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexually Aggressive
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Violent Aggressive

Youth Interview:

1. Age of Youth:

Score

16 to 21 Years	Score 0	
13 to 15 Years	Score 1	
11 to 12 Years	Score 2	
10 Years	Score 3	

2. Experience in Institution:

Ask: Have you been in a juvenile detention, residential facility, or group home?

No	Score 2	
Yes	Score 0	

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 3) No (move to question 2a.)

2a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

3. Social Skills:

Lead in with: How do you feel being in a facility with so many other juvenile justice youth?

Then ask:

- Do you feel you get along well with other people? Yes / No (Yes score 0, No score 1)
- Do you find it easy to make friends? Yes / No (Yes score 0, No score 1)
- Do you feel Okay about being in groups of people you don't know well? Yes / No (Yes score 0, No score 1)

Award a score of 1 for each No answer.

Score (0-3)	
-------------	--

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 4) No (move to question 3a.)

3a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

4. Perception of Risk

Ask: Do you feel at risk to attacks or abuse from other youths?

For example, have you received threats, insults, and harassment from other youths?

Prompt with options if necessary

NOT AT ALL	Score 0	
SOMETIMES	Score 1	
OFTEN	Score 2	

If sometimes or often, ask for more details (How they respond to threats) and note youth's statement below:

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Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 5) No (move to question 4a.)

4a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

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5. History of Victimization

Ask: Have you ever been attacked or abused by anybody?

Prompt with options if necessary

NEVER	Score 0	
A FEW TIMES	Score 1	
OFTEN	Score 2	

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 5b) No (move to question 5a.)

5a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

5b. Ask: Have you ever had a sexual experience that you did not want to have?

NO	Score 0	
YES	Score 4	

If yes, did the incident happen within a DJJ facility? Yes (Where? _____) No.

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 6) No (move to question 5c.)

5c. Provide relevant information and whether occurrence was within a DJJ facility below. Indicate score changed

--

6. Offense Type

Ask: Have you ever been arrested for a sexual offense?

NO	Score 0	
YES	Score 4	

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 6b) No (move to question 6a.)

6a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

6b. Ask: Have you ever initiated behavior that would be considered sexually aggressive?

NO	Score 0	
YES	Score 4	

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 7) No (move to question 6c.)

6c. Provide relevant information and whether occurrence was within a DJJ facility below. Indicate score changed

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7. Violent Offense

Ask: Have you ever been arrested for a violent offense?

Utilize Criteria guide for list of offense types and criteria for determination of violence.

NO	Score 0	
YES	Score 4	

Does the juvenile's response match DJJ records? Yes (move to question 8) No (move to question 7a.)

7a. Provide relevant information below. Indicate score changed

--

8. Intellectual Impairment

If the youth has previously been in a DJJ facility is there any evidence that this youth has been reported to have an intellectual impairment (low IQ), learning disability or Special Education classes?

NO EVIDENCE	Score 0	
EVIDENCE	Score 2	

9. Are you Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, Transsexual, Questioning/Queer or Intersex? Yes No

If yes, please indicate orientation _____

10. Lack of fit with juvenile justice facility culture

This item requires a judgment by the screener that this youth is unlikely to "fit in" within the mainstream juvenile offender culture. (Place a check in applicable box)

Look for features of the youth's physical appearance such as:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Build
<input type="checkbox"/>	Looks younger than stated age
<input type="checkbox"/>	Impaired vision (requires glasses)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pronounced disfigurement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appear frail, weak

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Look for features of the youth's presentation and behaviors such as:	
Inappropriate verbal behavior (e.g., giggling, odd remarks)	
Physical behavior (e.g. boys wearing makeup, cross dressing)	
Obvious effeminate behavior	
Acts of Aggression-observation	
Youth's behavior with the sibling(s)/residents	
Youth's behavior in school	
Speech Impediment	
Appears slow or "dull"	
Behaviors that are likely to irritate and annoy other youths (e.g., immature, silly)	
Behaviors that appear related to mental illness (e.g., jittery, crying, bizarre)	
Look for features of the youth which make him or her stand out such as:	
Having a lack of exposure to criminal lifestyle	
Being from an ethnic minority not well represented in the offender population (e.g., Asian, Indian, Middle Eastern)	
Membership in a gang	
Note other features not listed above:	
NONE OR ONE FEATURES	Score 0
TWO OR THREE FEATURES	Score 2
FOUR OR MORE FEATURES	Score 4

Risk Assessment

VULNERABILITY TO VICTIMIZATION	
1. Age of Youth	Score ____
2. Experience in institution	Score ____
3. Social Skills	Score ____
4. Perception of Risk	Score ____
5a. History of Victimization	Score ____
5b. Sexual Experience	Score ____
8. Intellectual Impairment	Score ____
10. "Lack of Fit"	Score ____
OVERALL SCORE	_____
Score of 9 or more indicates YES to VV	

SEXUALLY AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR	
6a. Sexual Offense	Score ____
6b. Sexual Aggression	Score ____
OVERALL SCORE	_____
Score of 4 or more indicates YES to SAB	

VIOLENT AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR	
7. Violent Offense	Score ____
OVERALL SCORE	_____
Score of 4 indicates YES to VAB	

Results		Single Room Only or Heightened Supervision	
YES	NO	YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Treatment/Counselor: _____ Date / Time Screened: _____

Superintendent/YS/PS: _____ Date / Time Reviewed: _____

Modifications

Override Date/Time: _____ Initiated by: _____

Override justification and additional comments: _____

Signature: _____

Superintendent/YS/PS / Approval: _____ Date/Time: _____

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