

PCL-R Report Write-Up Cheat Sheet

Reviewed by the BastionGPT Clinical Advisory Board · September 2026 · Reproduces no items, criteria, norms, or tables

The PCL-R (Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised, 2nd Edition; Multi-Health Systems, 2003) is a 20-item clinician rating of psychopathic traits, scored 0 to 2 per item from a semi-structured interview plus collateral file review, with a total of 0 to 40, two factors, and four published facets. The write-up's hard parts are the frame (who asked, and for what), the method (sources listed; file-only or prorating disclosed), the number (a band against a named comparison group, never a diagnosis or a prediction), and the courtroom (agreement between opposing raters runs far below research values).

Question + role who asked, and for what

Do: court or retaining party, order date, the question the score informs, your role, the notice given.

Pitfall: a section that opens with the score; the number does legal work before the question is on the page.

Procedure + sources interview plus collateral, listed

Do: edition; interview dates and participation; record categories with dates; collateral contacts; records not received.

Pitfall: "PCL-R interview conducted" when ratings rested on records; a prorated total presented as complete.

Rater + second rating training and independence

Do: licensure, PCL-R training, forensic experience; second rater blind and independent, both totals reported.

Pitfall: "qualified examiner" and nothing else; level C is a purchasing standard, not competence with this instrument.

Total as a band SEM, named comparison group

Do: total with the manual SEM as a band; comparison group and procedure named; percentile as a band in prose.

Pitfall: a bare integer; in court, single-rater agreement has run .39 to .59, far below research values.

Factor + facet pattern published labels only

Do: relative elevation across the four published facet labels, in prose; say whether both raters agree.

Pitfall: an item-by-item narrative, or the pattern rendered as adjectives about the person.

Limits diagnosis, prediction, conventions

Do: not a diagnosis, not a prediction, thresholds are conventions; field reliability acknowledged, safeguards named.

Pitfall: "the score indicates psychopathy"; the research threshold is a convention and the construct is dimensional.

Integration risk tool in its own section

Do: the risk instrument in its own section (HCR-20 V3, Static-99R); dynamic and protective factors; supervision conditions.

Pitfall: "high psychopathy, therefore high risk"; nine tools predict violence at similar moderate levels, Factor 1 at chance.

Before the note is signed

- ☐ Order or retention date, role, and question stated
- ☐ Interview conditions and every record category listed
- ☐ Rater training, licensure, and second rating on record
- ☐ Total written as a band with the SEM
- ☐ Comparison group and procedure named for percentiles
- ☐ Facet pattern in prose, no item narrative
- ☐ Not a diagnosis, not a prediction, conventions attributed

Drafting with AI

Give it the facts: the order and question, interview dates and records reviewed, rater training and any second rating, both totals, the comparison group, the facet pattern, the limits, the risk instrument used.

"Draft the PCL-R section of a pre-sentencing report: court-appointed examiner, two interview sessions plus the records listed, both raters trained, totals 23 and 21 averaged, male justice-involved comparison group, Factor 2 facets more elevated, limits stated, HCR-20 V3 in its own section."

Never paste patient-identifying information into consumer AI tools. BastionGPT is HIPAA-compliant with a signed BAA on every plan.

20 items, total 0 to 40
interview plus file review

Band, not a point
SEM about 3; name the group

Threshold = convention
research cut, never a diagnosis

Field ICC .39 to .59
disclose it; use a second rater

PCL-R Section Template

Copy or print for your practice · Adapt fields to your organization's, payer's and jurisdiction's documentation requirements. Contains no test content.

Setting: _____ Patient (initials): _____ Date: _____ Clinician: _____

Procedure + collateral sources: _____ Norm group + rater training: _____

Referral question and legal standard

Court order or retaining party and date · psycholegal question the score informs · your role · notice given

Sources and administration conditions

Interview dates and length, completed or declined · records reviewed by category and dates · collateral contacts · records not received

Rater qualification and second rating

Licensure · PCL-R training and experience · independent second rater, blind or not · both totals · averaging or consensus procedure

Total score with measurement error

Total reported as a band using the manual standard error · named comparison group and procedure · percentile band in prose

Factor and facet pattern

Relative elevation across the four published facet labels · whether both raters saw the same shape · no item narrative

Limits and inferential boundaries

Not a diagnosis · not a stand-alone prediction · thresholds are research conventions · field reliability and allegiance literature disclosed

Integration with risk assessment and formulation

Structured risk instrument and its section · dynamic and protective factors · treatment and supervision conditions · traits described, epithet avoided

Clinician (name and credentials): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____