Index of Clinical Stress (ICS)

The Index of Clinical Stress, or ICS, scale measures the degree or magnitude of problems clients have with personal stress (Abell, 1986, 1991). There are many different ways to define and discuss stress and you should know the ICS is not intended to cover all of the available definitions. Rather, the ICS was developed specifically to capture information about perceived imbalance between the demands of daily living and a person's ability to respond. In one sense, it is a fairly global measure of stress-related personal discomfort. In another sense, it is a specific measure of those feelings that are attached to such statements as "I feel stretched to the breaking point."

As with measures like self-esteem, one's personal stress can be evaluated globally or in relation to more specific personal and social circumstances. A client might, for example, experience little personal stress around his or her relationships with family members. On the other hand, the client might be experiencing considerable stress with regard to performance in graduate school.

In other words, you can structure your use of the ICS scale so that you control whether you're using it to measure stress more globally or whether you're aiming at more specific situations that may be making the client vulnerable to stress-related disorders or discomfort.

For example, you could ask the client to complete the ICS in relation to his work environment and then have him completed again in terms of his family like or leisure time associates. Whenever the ICS and is used to assess these more specific areas of stress, it is important to note the frame of reference the top of the scale as part of your documentation.

Score Interpretation

The scale produces scores that range from 0 to 100. For all practical purposes the scores can be regarded as true ratio scale values. A score of 0 indicates the client has none of the attributes of depression and a score of 100 represents the highest possible distrust level the scale is capable of measuring.

Cutting Scores

A clinical cutting score has not yet been established for this scale.

Reliability

The scale consistently achieves an Alpha coefficient of .90 or larger.

Validity

The scale has been investigated with respect to content, construct, factorial, and known groups validity. It nearly always achieves validity coefficients of .60 or greater.

Readability Statistics

Flesch reading ease: 89; Gunning's Fog Index: 6; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 4.

References

The following references provide the currently available research evidence concerning the psychometric characteristics for this measure.

Abell, 1986; Abell, 1991; Hudson, MacNeil, & Dierks, 1995.

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ICS

INDEX OF CLINICAL STRESS

SAMPLE

Name _____ **Date** _____

This questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about the amount of personal stress that you experience. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

      1 = None of the time
      2 = Very rarely
      3 = A little of the time
      4 = Some of the time
      5 = A good part of the time
      6 = Most of the time
      7 = All of the time

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1. _____ I feel extremely tense.
2. _____ I feel very jittery.
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____ I feel very relaxed.
6. _____
7. _____ I feel so stressed that I'd like to hit something.
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____ It is very hard for me to relax.
11. _____ It is very easy for me to fall asleep at night.
12. _____
13. _____ I feel like my life is going very smoothly.
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____ I feel that I am near a breaking point.
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____ I feel very much behind in my work.
21. _____
22. _____ I feel that I must race from one task to the next.
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____ I feel very much on edge.