

Rating Scale for Family Stress Checklist

The purpose of the rating scale is to assist FAS in objectively completing the Family Stress Checklist. The Family Stress Checklist questions should be scored as follows: 0 = Normal, 5 = Mild and 10 = Severe. The Rating Scale is copyrighted by the Hawaii Family Support Center (formerly the Hawaii Family Stress Center).

#1: Parent Beaten or Deprived as Child

(0) – Normal

- a) No corporal punishment.
- b) Spankings (less than six times ever with hand, belt, stick, etc., which left no bruises).
- c) Received consistent nurturing.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Spankings, more than six times, no bruises.
- b) Received intermittent nurturing.
- c) Witnessed physical abuse of sibling.
- d) Witnessed spousal abuse of parents.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Severe beatings, including bruising.
- b) Raised by more than two families.
- c) Raised by one or more families, but with no nurturing parent model.
- d) Bizarre psychological abuse (i.e., made to eat in garage or doghouse).
- e) History of running away from home.
- f) Constantly scapegoated as "black sheep" of family.
- g) History of sexual abuse.
- h) Removed from home or abandoned.
- i) Raised in family where one or both parents are alcoholics or drug addicted.
- j) "Don't remember" their childhood.

#2: Parent with Criminal/Mental Illness/Substance Abuse

(0) – Normal

- a) No arrests or one time mild offense (i.e., teenage shoplifting or stealing a car). Do not include any crime against a person.
- b) No drug use.
- c) One time experimental use of any drug.
- d) No alcohol use or occasional use up to one drink per day if this is not seen as problem by family (if seen as a problem rate as Mild).

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- e) Occasional drunkenness up to once per month if not seen as a problem by family (if seen as a problem, rate as Mild).
- f) Never required psychiatric care.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) More than one minor traffic violation or record of one minor juvenile or adult crime (speeding, minor theft).
- b) Any drug use more than once (rate as Severe any drug use during pregnancy).
- c) Drinking regularly with more than one drink per day or drunkenness more than once a month (if seen as a problem, rate as Severe).
- d) History of or currently seeing psychiatrist/psychologist for minor life crisis (i.e., counseling to improve life, rather than therapy for psychiatric problem).
- e) Parent demonstrates ongoing rehabilitation (for more than two years) but with history of:
 - 1. Multiple mild offenses/arrest;
 - 2. Crime against a person (i.e., assault and battery, armed robbery);
 - 3. Prison term;
 - 4. Heavy drug use;
 - 5. Alcoholism or heavy drinking; or
 - 6. Mental hospitalization or long-term psychiatric care.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Chronic pattern of criminal activity.
- b) Current or recent prison term (within last two years), driving under influence of alcohol or history of theft, burglary, felonies, prostitution.
- c) Chronic heavy use of any drug, including marijuana.
- d) History of recurrent episodes of heavy drug use, even if not currently using (i.e., heroin addict, now reformed, but who has repeatedly reformed and returned to heroin in the past).
- e) Any drug use at any time during pregnancy whether pregnancy known or not.
- f) Current chronic heavy drinking/alcoholism.
- g) History of recurrent episodes of alcoholism, even if presently "dry."
- h) Any drinking/drug use, regular or occasional, which results in violent episodes.
- i) Current indications and/or diagnosis of psychosis (i.e., medication prescribed by psychiatrist or history of hospitalization).
- j) Chronic pattern of psychiatric problems.
- k) History of diagnosed schizophrenia or sociopathic behavior.

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#3: Parent Suspected of Abuse in the Past

(0) – Normal

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Official report of mild abuse; children not placed in foster care or removed from home.
- b) Chronic use of illicit drugs with children present but not where parents are "out of it."
- c) Abuse suspected, but not confirmed.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Official report of serious abuse/death.
- b) Mysterious death of sibling.
- c) Children placed in foster care/removed from home.
- d) Child allowed to use any illicit drug (ever).
- e) Child present with adult using any substance where parent is unable to care for child due to intoxication.
- f) Child abuse suspected in previous marriage for either parent.

#4: Low Self-Esteem, Social Isolation, Depression, No Lifelines

(0) – Normal

- a) Close to at least one family member (i.e., sees regularly and/or can and does call on them for serious problems).
- b) Happy and content with life at present.
- c) Sees and enjoys other people regularly.
- d) Parent can name more than one lifeline and will actually use them.
- e) Parent has phone and transportation.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if two or more apply)

- a) Not close to family, with no hostility.
- b) Discontent with life, but sees this as temporary.
- c) Sees and enjoys other people at least once a week.
- d) Parent can name one lifeline only and will actually use it.
- e) Parent has no phone with none available and/or no transportation.
- f) Not high school graduate.
- g) Parent demonstrates difficulty in coping with life stresses.
- h) Late prenatal care (automatic 5).
- i) Unemployed, not seeking work.

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(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Not close to family, with hostility.
- b) Very unhappy or depressed with life and sees this as permanent, or does not see immediate end to situation.
- c) Rarely sees other people with little or no enjoyment.
- d) Parent can name no lifeline.
- e) Parent can name a lifeline, but will not actually use it.
- f) Parent will not "burden" anyone with problems; feels has to handle by self.
- g) Parent unable to cope with life stresses (i.e., current drug, alcohol, or criminal activity).
- h) History of childhood abuse and/or neglect without resolution.
- i) History of lifestyle (i.e., prostitution) or expressions of low self-esteem.
- j) No prenatal care.
- k) Chronically unemployed. Unable to keep job.

#5: Multiple Crises or Stresses

(0) – Normal

- a) Parent can name nothing that is stressful.
- b) Parents argue occasionally, but soon resolve without violence and do not see this as problem (if seen as problem, rate as Mild).
- c) Finances are not a big problem for family although they may not have "enough" money.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if two or more apply or if one listed under Severe applies)

- a) Parents argue frequently without violence, and do not see this as problem (if seen as problem, rate as Severe).
- b) Parents argue occasionally without violence but see this as stressful.
- c) Finances are "tight" but parent feels he/she can "manage."
- d) Recent loss of loved one who did not serve as lifeline.
- e) Recent change of job, with history of good work stability.
- f) Recent move, but previously in one place more than one year.
- g) Living situation seen as inadequate, but not stressful by family,
- h) One separation with no current threat of divorce.
- i) Multiple crises with which parent demonstrates good coping and does not feel overwhelmed.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if two or more apply)

- a) Parents constantly in conflict with or without violence.
- b) One parent very afraid of other parent.
- c) Finances cause much stress to parent.

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- d) Chaotic lifestyles with continual crises which parent feels unable to handle.
- e) Multiple separations and/or threat of divorce (end of relationship).
- f) Recent loss of loved one who served as lifeline.
- g) Frequent job changes.
- h) Frequent moves.
- i) Living situation seen as stressful by parents (i.e., temporary, overcrowded, conflicts).
- j) Any other stress parent mentions which is constantly present in his/her life and with which he/she is unable to cope or does not see hope of escape.

#6: Violent Temper Outburst

(0)- Normal

- a) No violence.
- b) Yelling, screaming, leaving when angry.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Parent throws things when angry, but not at people.
- b) Parent pushes or gives slaps when angry (not more than once in past two years).

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Parent hits or kicks when angry to leave lasting marks (i.e., bruises, black eye).
- b) Parent has history of violent behavior to others (i.e., assault, murder).
- c) Parent throws things at people.
- d) Parent breaks up house in uncontrollable rage.
- e) One parent is afraid of violence in spouse, though no history of violence.
- f) Parent afraid he/she may lose control.

#7: Rigid and Unrealistic Expectations of Child

(0) – Normal

- a) No information, but shows concern (i.e., has books, plans to ask doctor).
- b) Expects walking between 9 to 15 months, but will not worry until 15 months.
- c) Expects toilet training to begin at 1 to 2 years.
- d) Will pick up crying baby or expresses concern regarding possible illness.
- e) Shows concern for physical and emotional need of baby.

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(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Any expectations of walking earlier than above, but without rigidity (i.e., this is not essential to parent).
- b) Any expectations of toilet training earlier than above, but without rigidity, as in "a".
- c) Any expectations of walking/toilet training unreasonably beyond normal (i.e., walking at four years) may be indications of parent unwilling to or unable to detect serious development lags.
- d) Worries about spoiling the baby, but tolerant of normal annoying behavior.
- e) Will let baby cry for up to 1/2 hour, but expresses concern for needs of baby.
- f) Fear of being unsuccessful parent.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Any rigid expectation of walking or toilet training earlier than above (i.e., this is very important to parent).
- b) Intolerance of normal annoying behavior or excessively concerned about spoiling.
- c) Parent says he/she or spouse cannot stand crying baby and will become angry with same.
- d) Parent expresses no concern for needs of baby.
- e) Parent will not check on or be concerned regarding baby crying longer than 1/2 hour.
- f) Parent feels that infants and children intentionally misbehave out of malice and must be dominated to ensure "respect."
- g) Parent has no information, and has no plans to acquire information.

#8: Harsh Punishment of Child

(0) – Normal

- a) None for infant.
- b) Physical punishment not used or used as secondary strategy to withdrawal of privileges and "time out." When the child is punished physically no implements (spoon, paddle or stick) are used.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Yelling at infant.
- b) For older children, use of physical punishment, no implements used or bruises.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Physical punishment used for infant.

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- b) Shaking of baby.
- c) Implements used on older children. Physical punishment leaves bruises.
- d) Parent was abused as child and sees this as justified or as the right way to discipline.

#9: Child Difficult and/or Provocative as Perceived by Parents

(0) – Normal

- a) Not present.
- b) Child's behavior viewed as normal part of growth process.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Baby is wakeful, colicky, irritable, or so perceived by parents.
- b) Baby seen as sometimes difficult, but positives also mentioned.

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Baby's behavior seen by parents as provocative (i.e., "He wants to make me angry so he cries").
- b) Baby seen as having no good points.
- c) Baby is constantly difficult, or so perceived by parents.
- d) Baby seen as deserving of physical punishment.

#10: Child Unwanted or At Risk for Poor Bonding

(0) – Normal

- a) Baby is very much wanted, whether planned or unplanned.
- b) Parent displays warmth when talking about baby.
- c) Child rearing looked upon as positive life change.

(5) – Mild (rate as 5 if one or more applies)

- a) Baby is wanted but is premature.
- b) Parent initially wanted abortion or adoption, but now feels positive with changes being made in lifestyles to accommodate new addition to family.
- c) Unmarried parents.
- d) Prolonged separation from parents (i.e., longer than one week).

(10) – Severe (rate as 10 if one or more applies)

- a) Baby is unwanted (i.e., not coming at good time in parent's life and parent unsure if able to handle situation).

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- b) Baby must have certain characteristics if parent is going to love it (i.e., certain sex, looks, personality, etc.).
- c) Parent is not the natural father of baby, whether or not he states that wants baby.
- d) Baby seen as burden on lifestyles.
- e) No positive statements made about pregnancy or child rearing.
- f) Baby with many medical problems and/or physical deformities.
- g) Expects baby to patch up relationship; makes FOB responsible; baby has to love parents.