

Stress Scale for in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children

Component being measured:

- Attempts to measure the levels of stress experienced by in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children.
- Takes into account positive and negative aspects of in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children.

Why this outcome matters?

Higher levels of in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children stress related to:

- Quality of life and of the psychological state of the informal in-home caregivers for ante-preschool children
- The level of social inclusion for people/families with ante-preschool children who are in difficult situations

In particular, the caregivers will learn a better management of their children and situations, they will learn better coping skills, their life quality will increase, they will provide better care for their children (especially for ante-preschool children).

Tool details:

- Developed by Polaris Staff as an alternative to the Parental Stress Scale, to the 101-item Parenting Stress Index and to the Perceived Stress Scale of Sheldon Cohen.
- Provides a measure that considers positive aspects of in-home caregivers as well as the negative, 'stressful' aspects traditionally focused on.

Format of the tool:

- 20 – item self report scale – items represent positive (e.g. emotional benefits, personal development) and negative (demands on resources, restrictions) themes of early childhood care.
- Respondents agree or disagree in terms of their typical relationship with their child or children
- 5 – Point scale; strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree.

Use of the tool:

What can the tool help to assess?

- Changes in parental stress levels for parents/carers who have accessed targeted support, such as family support, parenting courses and one to one parenting support.
- The outcomes of services or areas of work focused on improving parents/caregivers capacity.

Practical administration:

- Self completion or could be administered as an interview.
- The scale is relatively short and easy to administer – can be completed in less than 10 minutes.
- Can be used as a before and after measure.

Scoring the tool :

We want a low score to signify a low level of stress, and a high score to signify a high level of stress.

In-home caregivers of ante-preschool children Stress Scale

The following statements describe feelings and perceptions about the experience of being a in – home caregiver of ante-preschool children.

Think of each of the items in terms of how your relationship with your child or children typically is. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following items by placing the appropriate number in the space provided.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

Regarding your role as in-home caregiver, in the last month, how often:

1	Have you felt nervous and “stressed”?	
2	Have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	
3	Have you been able to control irritations in your life?	
4	Have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	
5	Have you felt happy in your role?	
6	Have you thought that caring for child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than you have to give?	
7	Have you felt worry whether you're doing enough for child(ren)?	
8	Have you felt close to child(ren)?	
9	Have you thought that child(ren) is (are) an important source of affection for you?	
10	Have you thought that taking care of child(ren)'s education gives you a more certain and optimistic view for the future?	
11	Have you thought that the major source of stress in your life is taking care of child(ren)'s education?	

Quantitative Scales that can be used to measure the stress for in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children

12	Have you thought that taking care of child(ren)'s education leaves little time and flexibility in your life?	
13	Have you thought that taking care of child(ren)'s education has been a financial burden?	
14	Have you thought that it is difficult to balance different responsibilities about taking care of child(ren)'s education?	
15	Have you thought that some behaviours of child(ren) are often embarrassing or stressful to you?	
16	Have you thought that if you could turn back, you might decide to not take care of child(ren)?	
17	Have you felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of being a in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children?	
18	Have you thought that having child(ren) has meant having too few choices and too little control over your life?	
19	Have you felt satisfied as a parent/ in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children?	
20	Have you thought that taking care of child(ren)'s education enjoyable?	

Scoring

To compute the “*In-home caregivers of ante-preschool children stress score*”, items 5, 8, 9, 10, 19, 20 should be reverse scored as follows: (1=5) (2=4) (3=3) (4=2) (5=1). The item scores are then summed.

Scoring the tool:

We want a low score to signify a low level of stress, and a high score to signify a high level of stress

- Overall possible scores on the scale range from 20 – 100.
- The higher the score, the higher the measured level of In-home caregivers of ante-preschool children stress

Use a simple table to show the before and after results to evidence whether an intervention has had a positive effect.

- Comparison of individuals before / after or longitudinal overall In-home caregivers of ante-preschool children Stress Scale scores.
- The comparison of before and after mean average scores for groups (parents/caregivers) accessing the particular intervention/group sessions, service or provision)

References:

Partnership Adult Education, Stress Scale for in-home caregivers of ante-preschool children “*Non formal and informal strategies and methods for improve the competencies of home caregivers for ante pre-school children*” (2016) 2015-1-RO01-KA204-015105.

Bibliography:

Abidin, R. R., *Parenting Stress Index Professional Manual (3rd edition)*, Odessa, FL.: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1995.

This 120-item instrument contains thirteen subscales designed to assess stress within families with children aged 1–12 years. It is the most widely used instrument in the literature. A child domain score and parent domain score are combined yielding a total stress composite aimed at capturing areas of personal parental distress as well as stress in parent-child interactions and the role of child behavioral characteristics.

Berry J. O., Jones W. H., *The Parental Stress Scale: Initial Psychometric Evidence*, Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, August 1995.

The development of a measure of parental stress, the Parental Stress Scale, is presented. All participants (total N = 1276) completed the Parental Stress Scale and some also completed the Parenting Stress Index, a generic measure of stress called the Perceived Stress Scale, relevant measures of emotions and role satisfaction (e.g. loneliness, marital satisfaction, guilt, etc.), and one group completed the Parental Stress Scale twice. Analyses suggested that the Parental Stress Scale is highly reliable, both internally and over time, and related to the general measure of stress. Also, results were consistent across parents of differing parental characteristics, suggesting the stability of scale characteristics. The validity of Parental Stress Scale scores was supported by predicted correlations with measures of relevant emotions and role satisfaction and significant discrimination between mothers of children in treatment for emotional/behavioral problems and developmental disabilities vs mothers of children not receiving treatment. Finally, a factor analysis suggested that a 4-factor structure underlies responses to the Parental Stress Scale, despite its high internal reliability.

Cohen, S., Kamarck T., Mermelstein R., *The Perceived Stress Scale: A global measure of perceived stress*, Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, December 1983.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. The items are easy to understand, and the response alternatives are simple to grasp. Moreover, the questions are of a general nature and hence are relatively free of content specific to any subpopulation group. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way.