**Empowering Your Well-being Workshop
Assessments Handout
Debra Austin, JD, PhD**

**Stress Assessments[[1]](#endnote-1)**

**Symptoms of Stress**

Using the table below, assess the frequency that you experience common symptoms of stress. The more often you experience these symptoms of stress, the more likely stress is having a negative impact on your life.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Frequency of Symptoms** |
| **Symptoms** | Almost every day or night | 2-3 times a week | Once a week | Once a month | Rarely | Never |
| Headaches |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tense muscles, sore neck & back |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fatigue |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Anxiety, worries, phobias |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Insomnia |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Irritability |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Anger, hostility |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Depression |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eating too much or too little |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Digestive Problems (diarrhea, cramps, constipation) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Restlessness, itching, tics |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Perceived Stress Scale**

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic stress assessment instrument. This tool, while originally developed in 1983, remains a popular choice for helping us understand how different situations affect our feelings and our perceived stress. The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each question, choose from the following alternatives:

* Never = 0
* Almost Never = 1
* Sometimes = 2
* Fairly Often = 3
* Very Often = 4

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Calculating Your PSS Score

You can determine your PSS score by following these directions:

First, reverse your scores for questions 4, 5, 7, & 8. On these 4 questions, change the scores like this: 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, 4 = 0.

Now add up your scores for each item to get a total. **My total score is \_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.

Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress.

Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress.

Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress.

The Perceived Stress Scale is interesting and important because your perception of what is happening in your life is most important. Consider the idea that 2 individuals could have the exact same events and experiences in their lives for the past month. Depending on their perception, total score could put one of those individuals in the low stress category and the total score could put the second person in the high stress category.

**Mindset Assessment[[2]](#endnote-2)**

Place a check in the column that identifies the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can’t change very much. |  |  |  |  |
| 2. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Music talent can be learned by anyone.  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Only a few people will be truly good at sports – you have to be “born with it.”  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. Math is much easier to learn if you are male or maybe come from a culture who values math.  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it’s not often that people change.  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. I appreciate when parents, coaches, teachers give me feedback about my performance.  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance.  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. All human beings without a brain injury or birth defect are capable of the same amount of learning.  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. You can learn new things, but you can’t really change how intelligent you are.  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can’t really be changed.  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. An important reason why I do my school work is that I like to learn new things.  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.  |  |  |  |  |

**Mindset Assessment Scoring**

Circle the number in the box that matches each answer.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 1. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. personality/character mindset – fixed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. personality/character mindset – growth | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 10. personality/character mindset – growth | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 11. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. personality/character mindset – fixed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 14. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 16. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. personality/character mindset – fixed | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. personality/character mindset – growth | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 19. ability mindset – growth  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 20. ability mindset – fixed  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Total Each Column |  |  |  |  |
| Grand Total  |  |  |  |  |

Strong Growth Mindset = 45 – 60 points
Growth Mindset with some Fixed ideas = 34 – 44 points
Fixed Mindset with some Growth ideas = 21 – 33 points
Strong Fixed Mindset = 0 – 20 points

**Perfectionism Self-Assessment[[3]](#endnote-3)**

Perfectionism is a response to anxiety that can be damaging to your relationships and your performance. The following questions can help you assess if you’re struggling with perfectionism.

For each question below answer “yes” if it’s generally true of you and “no” if it’s generally not true of you. (You may want to ask a close family or friend to confirm your answers to be sure you’re being realistic in your self-assessment.)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Yes | No | I often think that I should’ve done better than I did. |
| 2 | Yes | No | I tend to put things off if I don’t have the time to do them perfectly. |
| 3 | Yes | No | I’m afraid to fail when working on an important project. |
| 4 | Yes | No | I strive to impress others with my best qualities or accomplishments. |
| 5 | Yes | No | I think less of myself if I repeat a mistake. |
| 6 | Yes | No | I strive to maintain control of my emotions at all times. |
| 7 | Yes | No | I get upset when things don’t go as planned. |
| 8 | Yes | No | I am often disappointed in the quality of other people’s work. |
| 9 | Yes | No | I feel that my standards couldn’t be too high. |
| 10 | Yes | No | I’m afraid that people will think less of me if I fail. |
| 11 | Yes | No | I’m constantly trying to improve myself. |
| 12 | Yes | No | I’m unhappy if anything I do is considered average. |
| 13 | Yes | No | My home and office need to be clean and orderly always. |
| 14 | Yes | No | I feel inferior to others who are more intelligent, attractive, or successful than I. |
| 15 | Yes | No | I must look my very best whenever I’m out in public. |

Scoring: Five or more yes answers suggest a potential problem with perfectionism. (This is a screening test only. For an accurate diagnoses, consult a qualified professional.)

1. Source: *‘Write Your Own Prescription for Stress,’* Kenneth B. Matheny, Ph.D., ABPP and Christopher J. McCarthy, Ph.D. ~ 2000. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Adapted from: <http://www.classroom20.com/forum/topics/motivating-students-with> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. By Bill Gaultiere © 2000, 2012
<https://medicine.llu.edu/sites/medicine.llu.edu/files/docs/self-assessment-perfectionism-test.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)