

Instructions for Scoring the Pediatric Symptom Checklist - 17 (PSC-17)

What is the PSC-17?

The Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC) is a brief screening questionnaire that is used to improve the recognition and treatment of psychosocial problems in children ages 4 to 17 years. It is used in place of the PHQ-9 for Health Home beneficiaries within this age group. Health Home beneficiaries ages 18 years and older are screened for psychosocial issues using the Patient Health Questionnaire - 9 (PHQ-9).

What is the purpose for administering the PSC-17?

The PSC-17 should not be considered a diagnostic tool. Its purpose is to alert parents and guardians of potential behavioral issues and encourage them to pursue further evaluation by a qualified medical or mental health professional. Review of the scoring of the PSC-17 can provide an opportunity for Care Coordinators, family members or guardians, caregivers, and the child to discuss development of the Health Action Plan (HAP) with goals and action steps developed to address some of the moods and behaviors the child may be exhibiting.

Is consent needed to administer or release the PSC-17?

Consent is not required by the biological, adoptive, or foster parent for children ages 13 years and older to self-administer the PSC-17. Written consent is required by the parent or representative to release the questionnaire results for children under the age of 13 years. Children ages 13 years and older must provide written consent to release the results of the questionnaire.

Who completes the PSC-17?

The checklist is completed by the biological, adoptive, or foster parent, or guardian on behalf of the child. Children ages 13 or older may complete the questionnaire. The person who completes the questionnaire should check the box that best describes the frequency of current moods or behaviors listed on the form.

What is the scoring for the PSC-17?

The values for scoring the 17 responses are: Never = 0 (zero) points Sometimes = 1 point Often = 2 points

The Care Coordinator tallies the score and enters the date and total score on the HAP. If a question is unanswered or left blank, it is scored as a 0 (zero). Four or more responses left blank invalidate the questionnaire and the total score is not entered on the HAP. If the family member or guardian is unable or declines to complete the questionnaire or the questionnaire is invalidated, leave the score blank (do not enter a zero for the score) and note the reason that the questionnaire was not completed or invalidated on Page 1 of the HAP.

How is the PSC-17 interpreted?

A total score of 15 or more points may indicate the need for a referral to a qualified medical or mental health professional. The responses and score should be reviewed and discussed with the person who completes the questionnaire. With proper written consent the results of the questionnaire may be released to other mental and/or medical healthcare providers. The PSC-17 contains subscales for internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior, and attention. These subscale scores are not recorded on the HAP but may be reviewed with the person completing the questionnaire.

Where can I find further information about the PSC-17?

For further information about the PSC, visit the Massachusetts General Hospital website at:

http://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/services/psc_home.aspx