

Scoring PSYCHLOPS

PSYCHLOPS as an outcome measure

PSYCHLOPS has been designed as a mental health outcome measure. It is highly sensitive to detecting change after a course of therapy.

PSYCHLOPS is not a measure the psychological distress of a population group

There are no normative population data for PSYCHLOPS. This means that it is hard to interpret the meaning of baseline scores. Conventional outcome measures can be used to define cut-offs, above which a client may be deemed to be suffering significant psychological distress. PSYCHLOPS measures the score for a unique problem. This score cannot be compared with the score for another person's problem. The initial score for PSYCHLOPS is unique to each individual. The main purpose of the score is to measure within-person i.e. the change in score for the items chosen by the patient.

PSYCHLOPS scores for each question

All of the responses in PSYCHLOPS are scored on a six point scale ranging from zero to five. A score of zero indicates the least psychological difficulty whereas a score of five indicates the most psychological difficulty.

Which questions are used for scoring PSYCHLOPS?

Not every question is used for scoring. The outcome score is obtained from Questions 1b, 2b, 3b and 4. For simplicity, the questions which are used for scoring are marked with the symbol: This symbol appears after the scoring boxes; the therapist may find it helpful to insert the score inside this symbol.

The questions which are scored are those relating to Problems (Questions 1b and 2b), Functioning (Question 3b) and Wellbeing (Question 4). Other questions provide useful information but do not contribute to the total score or change score.

Calculating the PSYCHLOPS total score

The method for calculating the total score is summarised on page 2 of each PSYCHLOPS questionnaire, Version 5.

PSYCHLOPS consists of three domains and four questions; each question is scored on a six point scale ranging from zero to five; the maximum PSYCHLOPS score is 20; the minimum is zero.

If both Problem scores have been completed:

total score = sum of all four questions: $Q1b + Q2b + Q3b + Q4$

If only one Problem has been completed:

total score = score for Problem 1 doubled, plus the scores for the remaining two questions: $(Q1b \times 2) + Q3b + Q4$.

Thus the maximum score for PSYCHLOPS is always 20, whether the client has scored only one Problem or has scored two Problems.

Calculating the PSYCHLOPS change score

The change score is the central quantitative outcome measure of PSYCHLOPS. The change score is the difference between the total pre-therapy score and the post-therapy score.

To calculate the score, simply subtract the post-therapy score from the pre-therapy score. If the score falls, the client has improved. If the score rises, the client has got worse (at least in terms of this particular form of self report).

Calculating the PSYCHLOPS effect size

The Effect Size is the way in which change can be quantified and compared to change as described by other outcome measures. An Effect Size of 1.0 means that the mean PSYCHLOPS score has reduced by one Standard Deviation following therapy. In health service research, it is generally considered that an Effect Size above 0.8 is large.

The Effect Size can only be calculated by using a software package such as Excel or SPSS to calculate a Standard Deviation.

$$\text{The Effect Size} = \frac{(\text{mean pre-therapy score} - \text{mean post-therapy score})}{\text{Standard Deviation of the pre-therapy score.}}$$

What do the other questions in PSYCHLOPS measure?

Questions 1a, 2a and 3a require a freetext response from the client in the freetext box. This information is useful in defining the types of problems and difficulties of clients.

Questions 1c and 2c summarise the duration of the problem. Responses provide useful information but they do not form part of the outcome score.

Question 5 only features on the during-therapy and post-therapy questionnaires. It refers to new problems which may have arisen during the course of therapy.

Question 6 only features on the post-therapy questionnaires. It is the validation question (asking how the client feels in him/herself having completed therapy, compared to when they started therapy). As a validation question, it would be expected that the response to this question should parallel responses to the other four questions.

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