

Pediatric Symptoms Checklist (PSC) Instructions

Description: The PSC is a brief assessment of dysfunction in major areas of a child's daily life. As a clinical measure, it is the first step in what should be a multistage assessment procedure. Positive screens with the PSC deserve careful and considerate follow up by a professional. For the PSC-17 (items 1-17), a total cut-off score of 15 has been recommended. Please notify MD if score on items 1-17 of either the Parent PSC or the Youth PSC is greater than 15.

Scoring: Items have response options of 0-2. Therefore, the first 17 items will provide a total score of 0-34.

Instructions: As part of the initial nursing evaluation, patients (who are age 11 or older) and one parent (of children 4 yrs old or older) will be asked to complete a form within the first 48 hours of admission. The score for items 1-17 will be calculated by the nurse and entered on to the initial assessment in Essentris. The forms will be labeled and FAXed to medical records for scanning. For those children with a score of 15 or more on items 1-17, the nurse should alert the resident that a child psychiatry consult may be indicated.

Note: Both false positives and false negatives occur, and only an experienced clinician should interpret a positive PSC score as anything other than a suggestion that further evaluation may be helpful. Data from past studies indicate that two out of three children and adolescents who screen positive on the PSC or Y-PSC will be correctly identified as having moderate to serious impairment in psychosocial functioning. The one child or adolescent "incorrectly" identified usually has at least mild impairment, although a small percentage of children and adolescents turn out to have very little or no impairment (e.g., an adequately functioning child or adolescent of an overly anxious parent). Data on PSC and Y-PSC negative screens indicate 95 percent accuracy, which, although statistically adequate, still means that 1 out of 20 children and adolescents rated as functioning adequately may actually be impaired.