

# Pediatric Symptom Checklist-17 (PSC-17)

Caregiver Completing this Form: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

|                  |   | Please mark under the heading that best fits your child |            |       | For Office Use |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|------------|-------|----------------|---|---|
|                  |   | NEVER   | SOME-TIMES | OFTEN | I              | A | E |
| 1.               | Fidgety, unable to sit still                  |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 2.               | Feels sad, unhappy                            |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 3.               | Daydreams too much                            |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 4.               | Refuses to share                              |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 5.               | Does not understand other people's feelings   |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 6.               | Feels hopeless                                |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 7.               | Has trouble concentrating                     |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 8.               | Fights with other children                    |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 9.               | Is down on him or herself                     |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 10.              | Blames others for his or her troubles         |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 11.              | Seems to be having less fun                   |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 12.              | Does not listen to rules                      |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 13.              | Acts as if driven by a motor                  |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 14.              | Teases others                                 |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 15.              | Worries a lot                                 |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 16.              | Takes things that do not belong to him or her |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| 17.              | Distracted easily                             |   |            |       |                |   |   |
| (scoring totals) |   |   |            |       |                |   |   |

**Scoring:**

- Fill in unshaded box on right with: "Never" = 0, "Sometimes" = 1, "Often" = 2
- Sum the columns.  
 PSC17 Internalizing score is sum of column I  
 PSC17 Attention score is sum of column A  
 PSC17 Externalizing score is sum of column E  
 PSC-17 Total Score is sum of I, A, and E columns

**Suggested Screen Cutoff:**  
 PSC-17 - I  $\geq$  5  
 PSC-17 - A  $\geq$  7  
 PSC-17 - E  $\geq$  7  
 Total Score  $\geq$  15

*Higher Scores can indicate an increased likelihood of a behavioral health disorder being present.*

# PSC-17 Scoring

The PSC-17 can help primary care providers assess the likelihood of finding any mental health disorder in their patient. The brief and easy to score PSC-17 has fairly good mental health screening characteristics, even when compared with much longer instruments like the CBCL (Child Behavior Checklist by T. Achenbach).

A 2007 study in primary care offices compared use of the PSC-17 to simultaneous use of the CBCL in 269 children aged 8-15, showing reasonably good performance of its three subscales compared to similar subscales on the CBCL. The gold standard here was a K-SADS diagnosis, which is a standardized psychiatric interview diagnosis. These comparison statistics are summarized below, with positive and negative predictive values shown based on different presumed prevalence (5 or 15%) of the disorders. Providers should notice that despite its good performance relative to longer such measures, it is not a foolproof diagnostic aide. For instance the sensitivity for this scale only ranges from 31% to 73% depending on the disorder in this study:

| K-SADS        | Screen               | Sensitivity | Specificity | PPV 5% | PPV 15% | NPV 5% | NPV 15% |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| ADHD          | PSC-17 Attention     | 0.58        | 0.91        | 0.25   | 0.53    | 0.98   | 0.92    |
|               | CBCL Attention       | 0.68        | 0.90        | 0.26   | 0.55    | 0.98   | 0.94    |
| Anxiety       | PSC-17 Internalizing | 0.52        | 0.74        | 0.10   | 0.26    | 0.97   | 0.90    |
|               | CBCL Internalizing   | 0.42        | 0.88        | 0.13   | 0.38    | 0.97   | 0.90    |
| Depression    | PSC-17 Internalizing | 0.73        | 0.74        | 0.13   | 0.33    | 0.98   | 0.94    |
|               | CBCL Internalizing   | 0.58        | 0.87        | 0.19   | 0.44    | 0.98   | 0.92    |
| Externalizing | PSC-17 Externalizing | 0.62        | 0.89        | 0.23   | 0.50    | 0.98   | 0.93    |
|               | CBCL Externalizing   | 0.46        | 0.95        | 0.33   | 0.62    | 0.97   | 0.91    |
| Any Diagnosis | PSC-17 Total         | 0.42        | 0.86        | 0.14   | 0.35    | 0.97   | 0.89    |
|               | CBCL Total           | 0.31        | 0.96        | 0.29   | 0.58    | 0.96   | 0.89    |

W Gardner, A Lucas, DJ Kolko, JV Campo "Comparison of the PSC-17 and Alternative Mental Health Screens in an At-Risk Primary Care Sample" JAACAP 46:5, May 2007, 611-618

PSC-17 Internalizing score positive if  $\geq 5$   
PSC-17 Externalizing score positive if  $\geq 7$   
PSC-17 Attention score positive if  $\geq 7$   
PSC-17 Total score positive if  $\geq 15$

"Attention" diagnoses can include: ADHD, ADD

"Internalizing" diagnoses can include: Any anxiety or mood disorder

"Externalizing" diagnoses can include: Conduct disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, adjustment disorder with disturbed conduct or mixed disturbed mood and conduct