BSL-23

Borderline Symptom List - 23 (BSL-23)

The BSL-23 is a brief self-report questionnaire designed to estimate the current severity of symptoms typical of borderline personality disorder over the past seven days. Derived from the BSL-95, it explores in particular emotion dysregulation, shame, feelings of emptiness, self-deprecation, thoughts of self-harm, certain dissociative phenomena, and fear of losing control. Its main clinical value lies in assessing symptom intensity and monitoring progress during treatment, rather than in categorical diagnosis alone. It is used in research and clinical practice to objectively measure the level of borderline distress and identify changes over time.

Number of questions	23 questions
Estimated duration	4 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Borderline Symptom List - 23
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Martin Bohus, Nikolaus Kleindienst, Matthias F. Limberger, Rolf-Dieter Stieglitz, Melanie Domsalla, Alexander L. Chapman, Regina Steil, Alexandra Philipsen, Martina Wolf (2009)
Category	Mood disorders

Preview of the 23 questions

In the course of the last week...

It was hard for me to concentrate

Not at all | A little | Rather | Much | Very strong

In the course of the last week...

I felt helpless

Not at all | A little | Rather | Much | Very strong

In the course of the last week...

I was absent-minded and unable to remember what I was actually doing

Not at all | A little | Rather | Much | Very strong

In the course of the last week...

I felt disgust

Not at all | A little | Rather | Much | Very strong

In the course of the last week...

I thought of hurting myself

Not at all | A little | Rather | Much | Very strong

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is rated from 0 to 4 according to the intensity of the symptom over the past week. The main score is the mean of the valid responses, obtained by dividing the sum of the items by the number of items answered. A higher score indicates more severe borderline symptoms. In practice, the questionnaire should not be interpreted if more than 10% of the items are missing, i.e., fewer than 21 responses out of 23. The most commonly used severity benchmarks for the mean are: none or low from 0 to 0.28, mild from 0.28 to 1.07, moderate from 1.07 to 1.87, high from 1.87 to 2.67, very high from 2.67 to 3.47, extremely high from 3.47 to 4. A score of around 1.50 or more may suggest a profile clinically consistent with borderline personality disorder, but does not replace a full diagnostic assessment. If the additional item on overall well-being is administered, it is interpreted separately and is not included in the main score.

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 Laura V. - Online Psychologist