

Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire (CAQ)

The Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire (CAQ) is designed to assess an individual's tendency to use cognitive avoidance strategies to manage stressful thoughts or situations. It is a useful tool for psychologists seeking to understand avoidance mechanisms in their patients, which are often observed in anxiety and depressive disorders.

Number of questions	25 questions
Estimated duration	6 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Gosselin, P., Langlois, F., Freeston, M. H., Ladouceur, R., Dugas, M. J., & Pelletier (2002)
Category	Anxiety, General

Preview of the 25 questions

How typical of you is the following statement?

There are things that I would rather not think about.

Not at all typical | A little typical | Somewhat typical | Very typical | Completely typical

How typical of you is the following statement?

I avoid certain situations that lead me to pay attention to things I do not want to think about.

Not at all typical | A little typical | Somewhat typical | Very typical | Completely typical

How typical of you is the following statement?

I replace threatening mental images with things I say to myself in my mind.

Not at all typical | A little typical | Somewhat typical | Very typical | Completely typical

How typical of you is the following statement?

I think about things that concern me as if they were occurring to someone else.

Not at all typical | A little typical | Somewhat typical | Very typical | Completely typical

How typical of you is the following statement?

I have thoughts that I try to avoid.

Not at all typical | A little typical | Somewhat typical | Very typical | Completely typical

The full questionnaire (25 questions) is administered online on Mentaal.

Administer this questionnaire 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

Automatic scoring with Mentaal

The scored results will be sent to you automatically as soon as your patient completes the questionnaire. Here's an example:

Scoring

Total score: 72/125

Subscales:

- Thought substitution: 16/25

Tendency to replace an unwanted thought with another one judged more neutral or positive.

- Transformation of images into thoughts: 16/25

Recasting mental images as verbal thoughts to soften their emotional impact.

- Distraction: 13/25

Using mental or behavioral activities to turn attention away from anxious or disturbing thoughts.

- Avoidance of threatening stimuli: 11/25

Tendency to avoid situations, objects or memories tied to emotional content perceived as threatening.

- Thought suppression: 16/25

Deliberate effort to actively push certain thoughts out of awareness.

Each item is rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means never and 5 always. A high score reflects a greater level of cognitive avoidance.

The questionnaire comprises 5 subscales:

- Thought substitution (items 4, 11, 17, 20, 25)
- Transformation of images into thoughts (items 3, 15, 19, 23, 24)
- Distraction (items 8, 10, 12, 13, 21)
- Avoidance of threatening stimuli (items 7, 9, 16, 18, 22)
- Thought suppression (items 1, 2, 5, 6, 14)