DSQ-40

Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40)

The DSQ-40 is a brief self-report questionnaire that explores the conscious derivatives of 20 defense mechanisms and groups them into three defensive styles: mature, neurotic, and immature. It is mainly used in clinical psychology, psychiatry, and research to identify habitual ways of managing internal conflict, anxiety, and stress, and to monitor certain changes in psychotherapy. Its administration is simple and quick, which makes it a useful tool to complement the clinical interview, particularly when exploring personality functioning. It is not a diagnostic tool on its own, and its subscores should be interpreted with caution, taking into account the clinical context and the overall level of psychological distress.

Number of questions	40 questions
Estimated duration	10 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Defense Style Questionnaire
Target audience	Adults and adolescents
Authors	Gavin Andrews, Manjit Singh, Michael Bond (1993)
Category	General

Preview of the 40 questions

I get satisfaction from helping others and if this were taken away from me I would get depressed.

1 - Strongly disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 - Strongly agree

I'm able to keep a problem out of my mind until I have time to deal with it.

1 - Strongly disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 - Strongly agree

I work out my anxiety through doing something constructive and creative like painting or woodwork.

1 - Strongly disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 - Strongly agree

I am able to find good reasons for everything I do.

1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 - Strongly agree

I'm able to laugh at myself pretty easily.

1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 - Strongly agree

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 on a scale from 1 to 9 according to the degree of agreement with the statement. Each defense mechanism corresponds to 2 items, which are averaged to obtain 20 specific scores. The defensive style scores are then obtained by averaging the mechanisms belonging to the mature, neurotic, and immature styles. The higher the score, the greater the use of the mechanism or style concerned. There is no universally accepted diagnostic cutoff, so interpretation relies mainly on the relative profile of the scores and their integration into the clinical assessment.

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