

Parental Exhaustion Inventory

This exploratory questionnaire brings together the signs of parental exhaustion (exhaustion in the parenting role, feeling fed up, emotional distance from the child, self-image as a parent) and the factors that contribute to it (demands and workload, support and coparenting, time for oneself). It helps recognize parental burnout behind a complaint of fatigue, irritability, or guilt, and identify with the parent where to lighten the load and where to strengthen resources.

Number of questions	28 questions
Estimated duration	7 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Parental Exhaustion Inventory
Target audience	Parents
Category	Burnout, Parenting, Stress

Preview of the 28 questions

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

Taking care of my child takes more energy than I have.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I have a hard time coping with my child's demands, crying, or tantrums.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I find it hard to take an interest in what my child is doing or telling me.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I feel far from the parent I'd like to be.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

My child's health, behavior, or schooling takes a lot of effort on my part.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

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

Scoring

Each statement is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) based on its frequency over the past three months. Each domain combines 4 statements spread throughout the questionnaire, giving a score from 0 to 16.

Reading the profile

There is no total score. Within each block, domains are ranked from most to least elevated, each with a description of what it covers and points to explore in the interview. The results show two blocks: the signs of parental exhaustion, then the factors that contribute to it. Parental exhaustion arises from a lasting imbalance between the demands on the parent and their resources (Mikolajczak and Roskam's model): looking at both blocks together shows where to lighten the load and where to strengthen support.

Clinical cautions

A frequent answer to the statement about words or actions toward the child that the parent later regrets ("Feeling fed up" domain) should be discussed in the interview, without judgment: parental exhaustion increases the risk of neglect and violence toward children. The urge to escape family life can come with thoughts of suicide, which the questionnaire does not explore: these are assessed in the interview when exhaustion is marked. Exhaustion that spreads to all areas of life, beyond the parenting role, suggests depression instead.

Limitations

This exploratory questionnaire has not undergone psychometric validation and has no cutoffs. It supports the clinical interview and does not provide a diagnosis.

Scoring example

Scoring

SIGNS

Self-image as a parent 13 / 16

Feeling like a bad parent, far from the parent one would like to be, with shame and guilt: the parent no longer recognizes themselves in the way they are with their children.

Areas to explore: the ideal parent the person compares themselves to, what they blame themselves for, how others see them, what they manage to do well despite the exhaustion.

See also: PSOC.

Exhaustion 10 / 16

Physical and emotional fatigue related to caring for and raising children, which rest is not enough to relieve.

Areas to explore: the most draining times of day, sleep, the age and number of children, the energy left for oneself and for the couple.

See also: PBA.

Feeling fed up 10 / 16

The feeling of having had enough of being a parent: impatience, the urge to escape, outbursts one regrets.

Areas to explore: what pushes the parent over the edge, the words or actions regretted and what happens afterward, the urge to escape and what holds the parent back.

Emotional distance 9 / 16

Emotional withdrawal from the child: the parent takes care of what is necessary but feels detached and little moved by their interactions.

Areas to explore: the pleasure still shared with the child, the moments when the connection still happens, how the child reacts to this distance.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Support and coparenting 14 / 16

Help from the other parent and from family and friends, agreement on parenting, feeling alone or judged in one's responsibilities.

Areas to explore: how tasks are actually shared with the other parent, disagreements about parenting, the people who can take over, criticism from others.

See also: MSPSS, CRI.

Demands and workload 8 / 16

What the children and family life require: a child's specific needs (health, disability, behavior), mental load, the standards the parent sets for themselves.

Areas to explore: each child's needs, how the mental load is shared, the parenting standards the parent sets and where they come from, the combination with work.

See also: PSI.

Time for oneself 8 / 16

The room left for one's own needs, rest, leisure, and relationships outside the parenting role.

Areas to explore: the actual breaks in the week, activities given up, guilt about taking time for oneself, the couple's life and friendships.

No validated clinical or psychometric cutoffs have been established for this test yet. The results should therefore be considered exploratory indicators, meant to support the clinical interview, not diagnostic findings.

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 Emily T. - Online CBT Psychologist